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Bhadra 12, 1882 (*Saka*)

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(Eleventh Session)

सत्यमेव जयते

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LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

62 *nP.* (INLAND)

THREE SHILLINGS (FOREIGN)

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LOK SABHA

Saturday, September 3, 1960/*Bhadra* 12, 1882 (*Saka*)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Mr. Speaker: There is no Question Hour today.

MESSAGES FROM RAJYA SABHA

Secretary: Sir, I have to report the following messages received from the Secretary of Rajya Sabha:—

(i) "In accordance with the provisions of rule 125 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to inform the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha, at its sitting held on the 1st September 1960, agreed without any amendment to the Plantations Labour (Amendment) Bill, 1960, which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 5th August 1960".

(ii) "I am directed to inform the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha, at its sitting held on Thursday, the 1st September 1960, passed the enclosed motion concurring in the recommendation of the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha do join in the Joint Committee of the Houses on the Bill to provide for the welfare of motor transport workers and to regulate the conditions of their work. The names of the members nominated by the Rajya Sabha to serve on the said Joint Committee are set out in the motion.

MOTION

'That this House concurs in the recommendation of the Lok Sabha that the Rajya Sabha do join in the Joint Committee of the Houses on the Bill to provide for the welfare of motor transport workers and to regulate the conditions of their work, and resolves that the following members of the Rajya Sabha be nominated to serve on the said Joint Committee:—

1. Shri Jagannath Prasad Agarwal.
2. Shri A. Chakradhar.
3. Shri Khandubhai K. Desai.
4. Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy.
5. Syed Mazhar Imam.
6. Shri Kumbha Ram.
7. Shri Lokanath Misra.
8. Shri K. L. Narasimham.
9. Shri Maheswar Naik.
10. Sardar Raghbir Singh Panjhazari.
11. Dr. Shrimati Seeta Parmanand.
12. Shri M. Govinda Reddy.
13. Shri Ebrahim Sulaiman Sait.
14. Shrimati Savitry Devi Nigam.
15. Shri Abid Ali.'."

(iii) "In accordance with the provisions of rule 97 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to enclose a copy of the Indian Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 1960, which has been passed by the Rajya Sabha at its sitting held on the 1st September, 1960".

INDIAN AIRCRAFT (AMENDMENT) BILL

11.01 hrs.

LAID ON THE TABLE AS PASSED BY RAJYA SABHA

Secretary: Sir, I lay on the Table of the House the Indian Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 1960, as passed by Rajya Sabha.

11.01¼ hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

FLOOD SITUATION IN DISTRICTS OF PUNJAB

Shri P. S. Daulta (Jhajjar): Under Rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Irrigation and Power to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

> The serious situation created by floods in some districts of Punjab.

The Minister of Irrigation and Power (Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim): News have been appearing in the Press about the serious situation created by the recent floods in Punjab and Members of the House have been anxious to be informed of the situation. I have not been able to get detailed reports of the flood situation, and the damage caused, from the State Government, in spite of telegraphic and wireless messages from my Ministry. According to such information, as we have been able to obtain, it would appear that heavy rains and consequent floods in the month of July and again from the third week of August have caused large scale damage in the State. The worst affected districts are Rohtak, Sangrur, Patiala, Karnal, Hissar and Ludhiana. The situation in Rohtak and Hansi towns has been so serious that Military aid had to be sought to fight the floods and to save the towns.

According to the earlier reports received from the State Chief Engineer, the rivers Ghaggar, Markanda, Sutlej, Ravi and Beas were in medium to high floods in the middle of July and again in the latter half of August, while the Patiala Nadi was in high floods in the third week of August. In the middle of July, the Godhori bund between Markanda and Tangri rivers was breached. In July and in the latter half of August, a number of breaches occurred in the railway lines leading to dislocation of traffic. Hearing about the serious situation in Rohtak town, my Ministry deputed a senior technical officer of the Central Water and Power Commission to proceed to Rohtak to study the situation. He returned only last evening with the latest information.

2. *Damage caused:*

The District-wise or Division-wise details of damage caused are not yet available. However, according to the State Government 3,842 villages and about 28 lakhs of people were affected. The cropped area affected is about 9·7 lakh acres valued at about Rs. 12·7 crores. 96,000 houses valued at about Rs. 2·8 crores have been damaged. 55 human lives and 296 heads of cattle were lost. The damage to public property is estimated at Rs. 1·6 crore.

3. *Relief Measures:*

The State Government undertook prompt action to afford relief to the sufferers as far as possible. Necessary equipment for rescue and relief i.e. motor boats, haulage boats etc. were rushed to the affected places in order to rescue the marooned people. Gratuitous relief to the extent of Rs. 28·7 lakhs and Taccavi loans totalling Rs. 29·7 lakhs were sanctioned by the State Government. In addition, a sum of Rs. 1·5 crores as gratuitous relief for supply of rabi seeds, and Rs. 71·24 lakhs for other forms of relief were sanctioned. Remission of land revenue in the affected areas was also sanctioned. Besides, the Deputy Commissioners have been authorised to give suitable grants to the family of any bread winner who may have died during these floods.

4. *Flood Control Works:*

As regards the flood control works executed in the Punjab State since the inception of the national flood control programme in 1954, the expenditure incurred up to June, 1960 on schemes approved by the Centre or the State is Rs. 306·89 lakhs. The provision of Central loan assistance in the Second Plan period to the Punjab is Rs. 394·00 lakhs.

5. *Situation in Rohtak*:

I shall now apprise the House of the situation in Rohtak town.

The drainage waters of the district of Rohtak and a part of Karnal are collected by a number of drains, all of which outfall into what is called the Main Drain No. 8, starting from Gohana, passing near Rohtak and falling into a depression on the west of Jhajjar. These drains have been designed for carrying away the rain water collected in the country in a catchment area of some 450 sq. miles up to Rohtak. The Drain No. 8 is designed for a discharge of 740 cusecs at its Head and 900 cusecs near Rohtak at the rate of 2 cusecs per sq. mile. This drain was renovated in the year 1953 and had been affording adequate protection against accumulation of rain water in the catchment area up to 1959.

This year, unusually heavy rain fell in almost the entire catchment of the Drain No. 8. The result was that the Drain attained its designed discharge of 740 cus. and designed gauge of 8 ft. at Gohana on 18-8-1960. Thereafter it rose gradually to a maximum gauge of 12·0′ on the 26th of August, 1960, when the discharge carried by the Drain was of the order of 2000 cusecs. Its banks were overtopped, and the water flowed out into the country on both sides to a width of about 1½ miles.

In order to save the Rohtak town a dowel was constructed on the left bank of the drain by means of sand bags. The spilling, however, continued on the right side. On the 29th of August, the spill water from the right side entered the drain again lower down and caused a breach in the left bank. The water from this breach followed its course through low areas and stood against the railway embankment.

The information, as obtained last evening, was that the water of the Drain was standing against the railway embankment over a length of about 4 miles from the Rohtak station towards Ferozepur at 8″ to 9″ above the top of the rails. Efforts were being made to hold it by rows of gunny bags filled with sand and earth put along the edge of the railway bund. But the railway bund breached at 7 or 8 places and the water gradually started finding its way into the Rohtak town as a result of which the outskirts of the town, specially the low lying areas, were under water. The outlet of the sewerage system of the town got submerged by the flood waters with the result that there was back flow through the sewers and some of the streets were filled with sullage water.

The Civil, the Military and the Engineering authorities were putting in combined efforts to close the breaches as fast as possible. The Commissioner of Ambala Division, the Brigadier Sub-area, Ambala and the Superintending Engineer, Western Jumna Canal, were all at Rohtak constantly watching the situation and taking decisions on the spot from time to time. Flood fighting, rescue and relief operations have been going on round the clock. Simultaneously the Public Health authorities have been taking action to see that the accumulation of water in the town did not give rise to epidemics.

The level of water in the Drain at Gohana was said to have started falling on the morning of 2nd of September, although the level of water at Rohtak had not yet started going down because of the discharge coming in from the intervening catchment areas.

I may assure the House that we will give our utmost consideration to any request from the State Government for assistance to deal with flood situation. For relief operations the State Government are eligible for financial

[Hafiz Muhammad Ibrahim]

assistance from the Centre in accordance with the instructions issued by the Ministry of Finance.

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Firozabad): So many people have died. There is danger of the railway property. It is a direct responsibility of the Centre.

Mr. Speaker: I was also hearing and the hon. Minister went on reading page after page. Of course about those details we were not anxious. In spite of this long statement, the hon. Member gets up and says so many people have died. Some people have died. But what can be done? There is no purpose of the hon. Member automatically getting up even after a statement. I am really surprised at this. We will proceed to the next business.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: I seek your protection. At least the railway property is the direct responsibility of the Minister.

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. Member want to become the Railway Minister? ....(*Interruptions*). Order, order. I am really sorry. We are all here representatives working as a team. There is no meaning in thinking as if the Ministers are not at all responsible, and as if the Opposition alone is responsible for everything. Whatever statement might be made, whatever steps are taken, still the Opposition Member has to get up and say: this has not been done. I will allow an opportunity of discussion if really I find it necessary. Unfortunately, the flood situation is very bad. Merely by one question nothing happens. You may say that 73 people have died according to your calculation and they may say that only 72 people have died according to their calculation. What is the use of such a discussion?

Shri Braj Raj Singh: It is not only Punjab or Orissa where the floods have taken a toll. In U.P. also there is very heavy damage. We are spending so much funds on the flood control and you may please ask the Minister, whenever such floods occur, to inform the House about the extensive damage caused to the people. That is my point.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Shri Satya Narayan Sinha.

11.13 hrs.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (Shri Satya Narayan Sinha): With your permission, Sir, I rise to announce that Government Business in this House for the week commencing Monday, the 5th September, 1960, will consist of:

1. Further consideration and passing of the Drugs (Amendment) Bill, 1960, as passed by Rajya Sabha.

2. Consideration and passing of the following Bills:

   Customs Duties and Cesses (Conversion to Metric Units) Bill, 1960;

   Banking Companies (Second Amendment) Bill, 1960;

   Delhi Primary Education Bill, 1960, as passed by Rajya Sabha;

   Indian Museum (Amendment) Bill, 1960, as passed by Rajya Sabha;

   Indian Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 1960, as passed by Rajya Sabha; and

   Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Bill, 1960, as passed by Rajya Sabha.

3. Discussion on the Ninth Annual Report of the Union Public Service Commission, on a motion

to be moved by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs, on Monday, the 5th September, at 3 P.M.

4. Discussion on the Report of the Direct Taxes Administration Enquiry Committee, 1958-59 and the memorandum of dissent, comments and recommendations by Shri G. P. Kapadia on the Report, laid on the Table of the House on the 21st December, 1959 on a motion to be moved by Sardar Iqbal Singh and others on Tuesday, the 6th September, at 3 P.M

5. Discussion on the situation created by floods in Orissa recently and the statement made by the Minister of Irrigation and Power in Lok Sabha on the 25th August, 1960 on a motion to be moved by H. H. Maharaja Pratap Keshari Deo and others on Wednesday, the 7th September, at 3 P.M.

6. Discussion on the Report of the Tariff Commission on the Cost Structure of Sugar and fair price payable to the Sugar Industry and the Government Resolution No. 49-1/59-SV-387 dated the 4th April, 1960 thereon, laid on the Table of the House on the 6th April, 1960 on a motion to be moved by Shri Rajendra Singh and others, on Thursday, the 8th September, at 3 P.M.

Shri P. S. Daulta (Jhajjar): Sir, on a point of order. When a Member draws the attention of the hon. Minister to specific points and the points are not stated in the statement, is he not entitled to ask questions? I have drawn the specific attention of the Government to these deaths and the relief work by the Centre and the conditions in rural Rohtak where it is draining. All officers are in Rohtak where there is no such drain. Where the drain comes in, in Rural Rohtak, none of the officers are there. I stayed there for two nights and I called the attention of the Minister to Jhajjar and other places where this drain goes. Where there is a small breach, all the officers go and they are standing there. Where all these drains pour their water—I have seen it for three days—nobody goes there. When I call the attention of the Government and move adjournment motions, they do not reply. I want to know what is the number of casualties in Jhajjar, what is the relief of the Centre and why rural Rohtak is not cared for.

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): I can understand the hon. Member feeling strongly about what is happening. But he is requiring detailed information every day. I do not think that helps the relief either. We are taking every possible step. All night large number of forces work; they are sent there—engineers and others—from Ambala, from Punjab and from Delhi.

Shri P. S. Daulta: They are all in Rohtak. I bet if one single personnel has gone to rural Rohtak.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I cannot obviously answer; it is a technical question. There is a General in command of these operations. He utilises his forces—whatever he has—engineers and others.

Mr. Speaker: There is no point of order in this. When I allow a detailed statement to be made, questions are put. On calling attention notices, I want the hon. Minister not to answer a single question but to make only a general statement. He takes time. He has made an elaborate statement. Only in very exceptional cases, I will allow questions and no hon. Member has a right to ask questions after a statement is made. If, thereafter, he says that he wants a discussion and if it is such an important matter, I shall consider it. So far as this matter is concerned, it is a technical matter and the Army is in charge of it—soldiers and others are there. It must be left to them to

[Mr. Speaker]

decide as to which to safeguard first and which not. We are not entering into a discussion about the engineering and other details. It appears from time to time from the questions that are put by some of the Opposition Members—I cannot say all of them—that there is no Government at all. They want to displace the Government, even with respect to such details as these. I am really surprised at this. The Government are doing everything that is possible. But to say: why did you not to go to this nullah and close it and so on—I cannot allow this. I am really sorry.

Shri Jaipal Singh (Ranchi West—Reserved—Sch. Tribes): The hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs has told us that on Wednesday the 7th we shall be discussing the Orissa floods. May I suggest that all the floods can be discussed?

Mr. Speaker: The Orissa floods are serious. There may be Punjab floods also. But by putting in the floods in some other parts of the country, you minimise the importance of the Orissa floods. Let us address ourselves to it. If there is an hon. Member from Orissa, I do not think he will agree to it..... (*Interruptions*). No more representation so far as this is concerned. I am not going to allow the proceedings to be interrupted for anything that is not on the Order Paper. The hon. Minister of Finance.

11.20 hrs.

BANKING COMPANIES (SECOND AMENDMENT) BILL*

The Minister of Revenue and Civil Expenditure (Dr. B. Gopala Reddi): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Banking Companies Act, 1949.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

> "That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Banking Companies Act, 1949."

The motion was adopted

Dr. B. Gopala Reddi: Sir, I beg to introduce the Bill.

Shri Jaipal Singh: I am sorry to interrupt you again but may I venture to say that no hon. Members of Parliament from the State of Orissa would have any objection to include Punjab floods also in the discussion?

Mr. Speaker: It throws open for discussion many things. Shall we discuss Punjab floods also while discussing Orissa floods?

An Hon. Member: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: It is impossible. Generally, you can talk about.... (*Interruptions*).

An Hon. Member: Rohtak is in Punjab.

Mr. Speaker: Shri Satya Narayan Sinha.

11.21 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FIFTY-FIFTH REPORT

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (Shri Satya Narayan Sinha): Sir, I beg to move:

> "That this House agrees with the Fifty-fifth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 2nd September, 1960."

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Firozabad): There is no mention in this about the time fixed for the discussion on the motion for the price fixation?

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*Published in the Gazette of India Extraordinary Part II, Section 2 dated 3-9-60.

Mr. Speaker: That will be done. If it has not come up before the Committee, it will come up before it on Monday.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: You had assured us in the House that you shall be giving some time for the discussion of the motion for sugar distribution and export and all that. May I suggest that it may be joined with this and some more time may be allotted for it?

Mr. Speaker: Very well, let us see.

Shri Khushwaqt Rai (Kheri): Sir, I have received a letter from the Private Secretary to the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs saying that along with the discussion on this resolution about the cost structure of sugar there will be a discussion on sugar also. Now the Minister has gone back on that. I would submit, Sir, that the sugar situation in the country and the cost structure of sugar may be taken up together and three hours may be allowed for that discussion.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members want to settle things on the floor of the House, why can't they ask the Minister also?

Shri Khushwaqt Rai: He has written to me that both will be taken up together, whereas now he says that only the cost structure will be discussed.

Shri Naushir Bharucha (East Khandesh): May I submit, Sir......

Shri Satya Narayan Sinha: I have put down here a discussion on the report. I do not follow what more the hon. Member wants.

Mr. Speaker: He wants the discussion to include the sugar situation in the country also and not only the cost structure.

Shri Satya Narayan Sinha: That will also be discussed along with the resolution if you permit, Sir.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon (Mukandapuram): May I know, Sir...

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. A motion has been tabled. I do not find any amendment on the Order Paper. No amendment has been tabled to the motion. I won't allow any oral amendment to be made.

The question is:

> "That this House agrees with the Fifty-fifth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 2nd September, 1960."

The motion was adopted.

11.23 hrs.

MOTION RE: SITUATION IN ASSAM —*Contd.*

Mr. Speaker: The House will now take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Shri Jawaharlal Nehru on the 1st September, 1960, namely:—

> "That the situation in Assam and the Report of the Parliamentary Delegation thereon presented to the House on the 30th August, 1960, be taken into consideration."

Shri A. C. Guha may continue his speech.

Shri Basumatari (Goalpara—Reserved—Sch. Tribes): Sir, I want to make a submission.

Mr. Speaker: No, Sir. I am sorry. Shri Guha.

Shri A. C. Guha (Barasat): Mr. Speaker, Sir, yesterday I was referring to what the States Reorganisation Report has mentioned about Assam. The report has stated about the tendency towards Assamisation. That has been practically the bane of

[Shri A. C. Guha]

the politics of Assam. The report has also stated in another connection that unless one language group consists of at least 70 per cent. of the total population that language should not be made the State language for that State. That is why all these troubles about the Bengalis have been started in Assam *i.e.*, to raise the percentage of Assamese and to reduce that of the Bengalies.

Sir, it is no use finding fault with the young men of Assam, because they are as good or as bad as the youngmen of other States. But they have been nursed on this ideology, on this intellectual food, that Assam is only for the Assamese and anybody who is not speaking Assamese is a stranger to Assam. This House will be surprised to know that even the Governor of Assam in his inaugural address to the Assam Assembly after independence referred to the Bengali as "the stranger in our midst" and he appealed to the Assamese to give a fair deal to the "stranger in our midst". This is the attitude of the intellectuals of Assam. The entire Press, the literature, the administration and even historical research work in Assam was conducted on this line. That is why this generation of young men has come to believe that Assam is meant only for the Assamese-speaking population.

Sir, this generation of young men and the entire intellectual and educated people of Assam have to disabuse their minds about this idea. They should think that Assam is a composite State, a heterogeneous State. That has been referred to by the States Reorganisation Commission. That has been referred to even by the Ajit Prasad Jain Committee. The Prime Minister also referred to the fact that Assam is a multi-lingual State. That fact has to be recognised.

Even yesterday there was a demand from some Assamese-speaking Members that Assamese language must be the State language of that State, whereas, on the other side, that young hon. friend of ours, Shri Hoover Hynniewta emphatically declared that the tribal people would not accept Assamese as the language for the State. Similarly, Sir, the Bengalies of Cachar have also their objection to the imposition of Assamese as the language of the State. I can understand the feelings of the Assamese there. I appreciate their natural desire about their language.

Sir, it was an evil day for India that we formed our States on linguistic basis. Every State has got its own language. Naturally, the Assamese people can expect that their language also should be the language of their States. That is a natural expectation and ambition. I do not know how the Central Government will satisfy their ambition. But the problem is really difficult there. If they had proceeded more tactfully, on a policy of conciliation and not followed a policy of forced Assamisation, I think the difficulties would have been reduced to a great extent and the task would not have been so difficult for them.

Shrimati Mafida Ahmed (Jorhat): May I say, Sir......

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. He is not yielding.

Shrimati Mafida Ahmed: Shri Guha is referring to Shri Hynniewta and said, he said that Assam......

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. What is the meaning of this? I would not allow this sort of interruption, unless it is a point of personal explanation.

Shrimati Mafida Ahmed: Just now I learnt, Sir, that I shall not be allowed to speak because I happened to be a member of the delegation. I would, therefore, request you to allow me to make some clarification.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. There is no good asking any clarification from him. The hon. Member will kindly resume her seat.

Shri A. C. Guha: Sir, on the first day of the debate some mention was made about a novel *Matikar* which means: "To whom belongs the land". This novel book is an indication of the attitude of the Assamese speaking people base on the agrarian movement, but what apparently is the theme of that book? My hon. friend, Shri Basumatari tried to explain that it was a book on community development. Sir, there is a song in that book. Young men were asked to stand in a line with bows and arrows in their hands and they sang this song:—

Bengal Kheda Bhai, Bengal Kheda
Assam Desar Para Bengal Kheda

It means: "Drive out the Bengalis, drive out the Bengalis, drive out the Bengalis from Assam."

Bideshi bangale desh lutile Dhan
sampad saklo harile

It means: "The foreigner Bengali has been plundering the country and stealing away all our wealth."

Shri Tyagi (Dehra Dun): When was it published?

Shri A. C. Guha: It was published in 1957, and it ran into more than one edition.

Shri Basumatari: Sir, he should not misquote the book like that. It does not mean: "Drive out the Bengalis". If you look at the meaning you will find what actually it says. It says that all Bengalis, non-Bengalis, the tribals and others should all join together and cultivate the land in a co-operative form. That is the meaning. Why should the meaning be distorted?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. He spoke already. He cannot have a second chance.

Shri Basumatari: Why should he distort and twist the meaning of that book in that way, Sir?

Shri A. C. Guha: Sir, I am not stating all these things in a spirit of acrimony or to score a point on Assam.

Shri Narasimhan (Krishnagiri): Sir, the hon. Member may be requested to place that book on the Table of the House. (*Interruptions*).

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Firozabad): Sir, I rise on a point of order. Within this House, Sir, is it permissible for any hon. Member of the House, howsoever high he may be, to threaten another hon. Member of the House. (*Interruptions*).

Shri Raghunath Singh (Varanasi): The leader of a party has gone to a member of that party.

Shri Basumatari: What I have stated is the actual meaning. He has misinterpreted it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Will he resume his seat or not? I think I will be obliged to ask him to keep out of the House if he persists in this kind of talk. I have seen him repeatedly doing this. He indulged in the same kind of interruption yesterday also. Yesterday he came from the last seat to the first seat. Today also he is doing the same thing. I cannot allow this kind of thing to go on.

Now, there is no point of order in this. I expect, on the other hand, the leader of every group to control the Members of his party, otherwise we cannot get along (*Interruption*). One or two opposition groups evidently do not feel their responsibility. They must control their own following. I welcome this kind of assistance so far as it is possible.

Now, Shri Guha may proceed (*Interruption*).

Shri Ranga (Tenali): Let us provide a bow and arrow to the Prime Minister also (*Interruption*).

Mr. Speaker: I can't hear—Shri Guha.

Shri A. C. Guha: Sir, I am stating this not in a spirit of acrimony or for scoring point over Assam.

Shri Basumatari: Sir, I was not threatened by the Prime Minister, he simply wanted me to resume my seat and I did so.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Will he keep quiet or not?

Shri A. C. Guha: I am stating this simply with this idea that the House should know the real problem, the size and enormity of the problem. It is no use indulging in some truism that integrity of India should be maintained. If this House allows certain things which undermine the integrity of India, then, certainly, it is no use uttering those truisms and those good wishes. That is why I am bringing this thing to the notice of the House. I am not saying this in any spirit of anger; if anything, I am only saying this with a spirit of agony and pain that these things should have happened in any part of India. It is an ominous sign for the integrity of India.

Sir, the Jain Committee has mentioned about the procession in Shillong. He has mentioned in the report a phrase said to have been uttered there. He has said that the Assamese language has been called the "donkey's language". I am not sure whether that phrase was uttered or not, but similar and far more objectionable abuses were being hurled upon the Bengalis by the Assamese. I have got printed things, hand bills and notices, with me, but I do not like to disclose them and mention those things here. But about the procession, the convener of that procession, Mr. T. W. Pakyntein, wrote a letter in time to the ashamed citizens of Shillong expressing his regret if anything like that has happened in that procession. I can place the letter on the Table of the House. This letter was suppressed by the Assam press. This was not read at the public meeting, which the Assamese convened afterwards. I am sorry that the parliamentary delegation also did not refer to this letter. That gentleman expressed his sincere regret if such a thing had happened and if such a thing had been uttered about the Assamese language. He was sure that there was no such intention in the minds of the organisers, namely, to utter those words.

Then, it has also been mentioned that the trobubles started from the 4th July. I have got a list. From 26th June to 3rd July, there were at least 110 cases reported to the police. The police had taken cognizance of these 110 cases. There must have been many more cases which were not reported to the police. So, up to 3rd July, starting from the 26th June, within seven days, there were at least 110 cases reported to the police who took cognizance of them. Some of the cases were of a serious nature; perhaps my hon. friend Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava may be able to decide about the seriousness of these cases and to explain the relevant sections of the Penal Code. I am not a lawyer. But I am told that some of the cases were molestation of women and one case was of rape.

So it is not quite correct to say that the trobules started only from the 4th July. The troubles started long before that. The troubles started when our hon. friend Shri Feroze Gandhi went to Assam by the end of April or early in May. I think he went there on the 21st April in connection with the work relating to the Assam refinery. I am told by Shri Feroze Gandhi that there were only about 40 Bengali-speaking employees out of a total of 400 employees and they were all permanent residents of Assam. Still, my hon. friend Shri Hem Barua has told Shri Feroze Gandhi that these 40 people also, out of 400 employees, should be removed from the service of the Assam Oil Refinery.

Shri Jaipal Singh (Ranchi West—Reserved—Sch. Tribes) I want to assist my hon. friend on the other side, because Shri A. C. Guha has said something that could be very badly misunderstood. He said that the trouble started when Shri Feroze Gandhi went there. It would mean that Shri Feroze Gandhi started it!

Mr. Speaker: I do not think he understands it in that way.

Shri Jaipal Singh: It would be misunderstood.

Mr. Speaker: It would not be misunderstood. Everybody understands Shri Feroze Gandhi.

Shri A. C. Guha: This present generation of young men has been nursed on the idea that Assam is the land only for the Assamese-speaking people. Their mind has to be disabused of it. Since the day when Shri Chaliha assumed charge of the State of Assam, he has been trying to improve things. In fact he has changed some of the rules and regulations. That is why the demonstrators, along with the demand for the blood of the Bangalis, have also demanded the blood of Shri Chaliha. One of the war-cries was, not only should Shri Chaliha resign but also the blood of Shri Chaliha should be shed.

Only from the 1st September, the Students Demand Week was scheduled to be started, but fortunately, the Assam Government has banned it. What were the demands scheduled for that week? One of the demands was that Assamese should immediately be made the State language. Then, Shri Chaliha should resign. What is the offence of Shri Chaliha? Because he has been trying to be more liberal and was trying to adopt a wiser policy as regards the future of Assam! That the Chaliha family has intermarriage with Bengalis was, perhaps, another offence. That is why the chauvinists have been trying to dislodge or discredit him. It is no use denying the fact that some elements in the Congress were behind this trobule; some elements in all other political parties were also behind this trouble. It is for all these parties to see that all these elements are exposed and proper action taken against them.

Shri Ram Sewak Yadav (Barabanki): Which are those parties?

Shri A. C. Guha: That is why we demand that there should be an enquiry, as Acharya Kripalani has said.

Now, if he wants his party to be thoroughly examined, I say that the activities of all parties should be examined. It should also be the concern of the Congress organisation to see that the Congress is cleared of all such elements who may be lurking there with sinister motives and who may be trying to create trouble within the two sections of Assam.

An Hon. Member: What about the Communists?

Shri A. C. Guha: All the parties which have been indulging in inflammatory speeches. I can also admit that none of the political leaders would have expected or apprehended a rising of this nature, a holocaust of this size and dismension. But they created all the trobule. These include the Congress, the PSP, the Communists and all other parties. There is another party, the RCPI, which is not represented in this House.

Sir, I shall not speak about the incidents that have taken place. These are horrible stories. Much has been said about them. In the Jain report also, there is a clear indication of the nature of the incidents, and I think that the enquiry which the Prime Minister has announced in this House will disclose all these things.

I should like to mention at least one case of these incidents. There was an old **ashram**—the **ashram** of

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Swami Nigamanand a religious institution. Even from our good old days, we were reading books of Swami Nigamananda about the training of men into nationalism and into life of purity and truth as propagated by this ashram, among other things. That ashram has been working there for more than 60 years. That has been ravaged and destroyed. To what low level this fury could have dragged them down! I do not know the exact value of what has been destroyed. But I am told that the loss would run to several lakhs of rupees. That religious institution, doing social work, also fell a prey to the linguistic chauvinism exhibited by the demonstrators. I am also told that certain other Hindu temples belonging to the Bengalis have been desecrated.

Yesterday, Shri A. P. Jain interrupted in the course of a speech and said that in Cachar some houses belonging to Assamese-speaking had been burnt. I am told that not a single house belonging to Assamese-speaking people within the district of Cachar was burnt. I think I can quote the authority of Shri Anil Kumar Chanda for this, as he belongs to Cachar and knows things there much better than Shri A. P. Jain is expected to know. I think Shri A. P. Jain should not have made such a statement without ascertaining the proper facts about the situation there.

Another thing has been said in defence of the Assam Government, namely, that Shri Chaliha fell sick and the next man in the Ministry, Shri Fakruddin Ali Ahmed and also the Chief Secretary, were away in Kashmir. Shri Chaliha fell sick on the 6th July and Shri Fakruddin Ali Ahmed left Assam on the 25the June and came back to Assam either on the 5th or on the 6th July. So, there was practically no gap between the illness of Shri Chaliha and the return of Shri Fakruddin Ali Ahmed. Why then could the Assam Government not act in the matter? Of course, I do not accept the premise that the absence of Shri Fakruddin Ahmed or the illness of Shri Chaliha should have immobilised the Assam Government completely. That cannot be any excuse for their complete inactivity and, in certain cases, also for connivance in the activities of the demonstrators and trouble-makers.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member's time is up.

Shri A. C. Guha: I am finishing with one more point. As the Assam Government have failed, similarly, the Central Government have also failed. I do not command the eloquence of Shri Tyagi, my hon. friend sitting in front of me, but I share his feelings that the Central Government has failed in taking steps in time. Simply sending the army is not enough. At whose disposal was it placed? If the army was placed at the disposal of the State Government, to be moved only on request of the State Government, then, it was no use sending the army, because the State Government did not take any action. So, the Central Government and the intelligence department of the Central Government have also failed in this regard.

Before I resume my seat, I would like to make an appeal to this House: that we should consider what man has made of man. We should think of the thousands of terror-striken of uprooted men in Assam. I think it is Wordsworth who in one of his poems, has said: "What man has made of man". I should like to remind this House of what the well-known Vaishnava poet of Bengal, Chandi Das said. He taught us:

शुन रे मानुष भाइ, सवार उपरे मानुष सत्य,
तार उपरे नाइ ।

"Hear, oh! Brother, man! Over every thing else is man true; There is nothing above man."

Man should not be sacrificed in this orgy of linguistic or sectional fanaticism; man has to be saved. All other developmental works go to nothing if man cannot be protected and if we cannot produce the true type of man and humanity in India.

Shri Narasimhan: I would like to ask two questions before the hon. Home Minister starts, so that it may be easier for him to answer. The first question is, would it not be better to put the refugees in Cachar area where the Bengali population is predominant, instead of their being kept in Bengal? Secondly, what use did the Government of India make of the agency of the Governor of Assam? Why was any role not assigned or played by him?

The Minister of Home Affairs (Shri G. B. Pant): To both these questions I think I might reply just now. The people who have gone from Bengal to Assam should be rehabilitated in their original homes in Assam. It would not be fair to ask them to change their home State and be removed to another place. So, every attempt will be made by Government to see that they are properly and safely rehabilitated in their original homes.

As to the other question, the Governor of Assam has been quite active and he has been co-operating with the Government and using his own experience, resources and whatever he has attained in the course of his long service for the solution of the difficulties which have faced Assam in recent months.

Sir, I should like with great respect to express my appreciation of the manner in which this debate has been conducted in this House. Hon. Members have expressed their views and also offered their criticisms wherever they thought necessary without acrimony or rancour and they have spoken with candour, with vigor and many with marked eloquence. That this House should be able to conduct its proceedings on a ticklish subject of this character with such dignity and decorum is a tribute to the discipline that we have acquired in running democratic institutions. For that, the House, and you in particular, deserve congratulations, if I may say so, though the subject is a very painful one, which we are dealing with just now.

While opening the debate, the Prime Minister dealt with the various aspects of this problem and made an authoritative statement. So, it is not necessary for me to repeat in substance what he has already dated. My friend, Shri A. K. Sen, who has spent a number of days in Assam, doing everything possible to help those who had suffered and to bring about an atmosphere which would facilitate and accelerate the process of rehabilitation and has instilled a sense of security, has also given his views and impressions in a very eloquent and lucid manner. I hope, in the circumstances, I will not take a long time of this House.

I should like to express at the outset my grateful appreciation of the pains taken and the thought bestowed on this subject by the Members of the Parliamentary Delegation. Their report is a weighty document and I am really thankful to the leader and to the other Members for the strenuous time that they spent for more than a fortnight continuously. They were out of Delhi for nearly 12 days and during all the time that they were out, they were running from place to place and hardly had any hours for taking rest or even for sleep. So, the report that they have presented bears the imprest of the manner in which they have dealt with the various issues in a dispassionate and detached way.

I was sorry that some of the hon. Members found fault with this report. It is open to anyone to agree or to disagree with any of the proposals contained in the report or the statements made there; but, to insinuate that the report did not convey the genuine and impartial opinions and

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conclusions reached by the Members of the Delegation is hardly fair. The Parliamentary Delegation was appointed by you and the hon. Chairman of the Rajya Sabha and it had been entrusted with a difficult task. In the circumstances, their efforts should have been appreciated. But I am afraid that they have not been given their adequate meed for what they have done.

Sir, I personally feel, after listening to the speeches that were made in this House, whether on this side or on that, that there is a great deal of agreement among the members of this House. The differences may be magnified, but they are not really so sharp as one would like to magnify them into, or imagine them to be.

So far as the tragic occurrences that has taken place in Assam are concerned, everyone has condemned them; everyone who has spoken has expressed his profound sorrow over such happenings. And the feeling of some of us is not one merely of anguish but also of dismay to some extent, mixed with depression and a certain element of despair. The country had gone through unmentionable sufferings in the wake of and during the partition. It had, during those days, gone through the fire of a terrific holocaust and when we achieved independence we had earnestly hoped that we would be able to advance forward without any hindrance or impediment in a peaceful way. We all had accepted non-violence and in whatever things we might have failed we had thought that, so far as our adherence to non-violence was concerned, there would be no deviation. So, we got a shock when we saw the enormity of the damage and loss of life, mostly of house and property, caused by arson, looting and other crimes. I do not see how any Member in this House can remain unmoved by the stories that have reached us.

The facts are fully stated in the Report and, so far as those facts are concerned, there is no difference of opinion between the members of the Delegation. Two of them differed with regard to one of the proposals or recommendations and one with regard to more than one recommendation, but, so far as facts are concerned, there is unanimity among the members who had gone there. I think it would not be desirable to assume that anything different from what they have stated in their report has occurred. If there has been, they would have mentioned it. So, we should not believe the rumours that sometimes are circulated on occasions like this. I do not say that those who repeat them are not satisfied themselves, but it is natural that on occasions like these, rumours of various types do get afloat and are repeated by many people in loose manner. So, we should accept the facts as they are given in the Report.

But what happened in Assam, whatever be other causes, was the gruesome manifestation of the spirit of fanatical linguism, regionalism, parochialism and a greed or desire, whatever you call it, to monopolise all public offices within the State. These are at the root. When we gained our independence we used to think only in terms of the nation, and nobody thought more of his own State or even of the town or the Mohalla in which he lived. Since then, there has been a visible deterioration in the attitude of mind, and the malady, I say, is one which has to be cured and we must learn a lesson from what has happened in Assam.

Acharya Kripalani, in the inspiring speech that he delivered the other day, gave us an analysis of the situation and the developments that are taking place. We have to take them to heart and see what we can do in order to get over this growing narrowness and, if I may say so, even pettiness in our own minds, and ultimately we have to be more national in our outlook. While we may not ignore the affinities that are natural, they have to be given only minor place and not allowed to swallow the very basis of nationalism on which everything else rests.

In this connection, I would also mention that these occurrences in Assam have special importance inasmuch as Assam is the eastern citadel of our country; specially in the existing circumstances, it is essential to have peace and goodwill, harmony and concord among the people living in Assam.

12 hrs.

The fact that some speak one language and others a different one should not come in the way of that unity which is necessary or essential in the existing circumstances. If these squabbles go on and there is this sort heartburning and if the spirit of hatred or animosity is not completely controlled and replaced by one of amity and fellowship, then we will suffer —not only the State of Assam but the whole of India will suffer. In fact, this is a question which affects not only Assam or Bengal but every part of our country.

We have some fundamental rights. We have undertaken to stand by certain principles. We have given certain pledges not only to the people living in any particular State but to all sections and communities, whether they are in a majority or in a minority, that they will have a right to live in peace and enjoy the benefits that the State or the country can provide in an equal measure with everyone else. So, those fundamental rights have to be respected, observed and practised.

Having mentioned these few preliminary but basic fundamental facts I would like to state that this holocaust in Assam descended between the 4th and the 12th of July. The immediate cause was the linguistic agitation. There may be deeper causes —and probably there were. There may be also some miscreants behind all that was engineered and done but the immediate cause was associated with language. The proposal for having Assamese as the State language was made and has been before the people of the Valley at least for a pretty long time. When the Governor's Address was last discussed it was pointed out by the Opposition that no reference to language or to the acceptance of Assamese as the State language had been made in the Address. Almost all the members of the Opposition were united in this demand. On that occasion the Chief Minister of Assam, Shri Chaliha, made a statement. I do not want to read the whole of it, but he said:

> "Government would prefer to wait till they get the same demand from the non-Assamese-speaking population for declaration of Assamese as a State language. Government feel that this question should be judged more from the point of view of appreciation and acceptance than from the point of view of majority or minority. If this issue is decided only on the basis of majority or minority, the Government is afraid that its object would be defeated.".

While the statement made by the Chief Minister was in a way welcomed by those who did not speak Assamese, there was an agitation started in the Valley. It was mostly the people who did not belong to the Congress who started and organised that movement. I think that some of the Congressmen also may have had sympathy with that, but they could not, in view of this statement, openly take part in any such activity. Thereafter on account of this agitation the Assam State Congress considered this question and gave thought to it. They passed a resolution which has been appended to this report and in which they said that Assamese might be adopted as the State language for use for such purpose as may be determined by Government but Cachar and the Hill areas should be excluded till they are ready

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for it. Then there are other parts in it which say that so far as employment goes nobody will be debarred because of his ignorance of Assamese and also that protection will be given to the minorities and so on. That resolution is attached to this. They had hoped that this resolution would lead to some sort of an understanding and there would be no further agitation over the question, but the result was just the contrary. There was agitation among the people who lived in the Valley and also among those who lived in Cachar and in the Hill areas. So this agitation continued.

Sometimes some remarks were made which gave cause for irritation here. Something was said in another place and there were a number of meetings, demonstrations, counter-demonstrations etc. On the 21st June, I think, the Chief Minister issued a statement and said that he was sorry that there had been such an amount of excitement over it and he appealed to the people to maintain peace and calm and not to lose their heads over this affair. That was about the 21st of June, I think.

The Minister of Law (Shri A. K. Sen): Twenty-third.

Shri G. B. Pant: That statement too is appended to this report. But even that did not produce the desired result and the situation became somewhat tense.

There had been some petty incidents and they continued on till the 30th June when the District Magistrate had to promulgate orders under Section 144 and also I think he imposed curfew at Gauhati. But, on the 1st, he withdrew the orders regarding curfew at the insistence, I understand, of one of the hon. Members of this House who said that he could not acquiesce in or comply with such an order and that it should be withdrawn. A Peace Committee was also formed. So, the District Magistrate withdrew the order.

On the 2nd, however, the situation deteriorated again and things became somewhat worse. Some things had been happening from time to time and on the 3rd, as I said, the situation did not show any marked improvement. On the 4th, a few houses near a school or college were set on fire and one boy died and six others were injured, so far as the injuries at least by bullet are concerned. The police had recourse to firing. Thereafter, some time later, the boy's dead body was foolishly taken from Gauhati to Jorhat in Sibsagar district passing through Nowgong and other places and it created further excitement. From the 4th onwards there was violence in an extreme form in the valley. Unfortunately, the sufferers were those who had not raised any objection against the acceptance of Assamese as the State language. In fact, some of the leading members of the Bengalee community had presided over meetings held in support of this proposal. Still, these people had to suffer.

I need not give a detailed account of this orgy of violence which continued for eight days. After the 12th, the situation was brought under control, or rather law and order restored to a large extent. There were no major incidents except for a day or two perhaps in Sibsagar or Nowgong. Otherwise, the situation was retrieved to a great extent. Thus, there was bad time during the 8 days.

I personally had been in close touch with the Chief Minister and also with the Governor and later with the Finance Minister. There was some confusion, I think, in some of the statements made here when it was said that the Finance Minister and the Chief Minister were both absent and incapacitated. The Chief Minister continued to work till the 5th of July and the Finance Minister reached there on the 5th. I had occasion to write to the Chief Minister from time to time and I gave him such advice as I thought would be appropriate in the circumstances. There was every hope, and in fact, there had been little doubt that the situation—I am talking of the period before the 4th—was not in any way very difficult and that they could bring it under control. That was the view of the Chief Minister in a letter which I received about the end of June and I had discussed with the Governor who seemed to be of the same opinion.

Then, I saw that the situation had not improved because of what had happened in Gauhati and during a day or two before the end of the month of June. I wrote to the Chief Minister on the 3rd of July a letter in the course of which I said:

> "Serious as the present situation is, its potentialities are even more dangerous. The Ministry of Defence have arranged for a battalion of the Army to stand by for aid to civil power in case of need. If the situation worsens and, in your judgment, the aid of the Army is required, the battalion will be available."

I also said in my letter that suitable arrangements should be made for liaison with the Army authorities.

I had occasion to meet the Finance Minister, I think, on the 4th of July. I discussed the situation with him. We then studied the situation as it had developed and I made certain requests. On his return, he himself said that all the Ministers were active, they were going round; and some of the Congressmen also were trying to get over the situation which had befallen Assam, and other combined efforts did produce some results from the 4th onwards. I was also in touch with the Governor, and I understood from him on the 7th or 8th that within three or four days this holocaust would cease, that deterioration of that magnitude would not continue and law and order would be brought under control. What he had said proved to be correct, for, as I said, by the 12th the situation had been to a large extent brought under control.

I need not refer to the correspondence that I had thereafter, the suggestions that I made for rehabilitation and other measures that seemed to me to be necessary, but I have perhaps to make one statement, and I do so unreservedly. If there has been any lapse on the part of the Central Government, then I am primarily and, if the Prime Minister will let me say so, even solely responsible for it and no one else should be blamed for it. I have tried to do what I thought I could in the circumstances and the failure in doing what others might think should have been done was on my part. So, about that there need be no doubt in the House.

It has been suggested here that we should have imposed President's rule in Assam, and it has been further suggested that we refrained from doing so because the Government in Assam also was connected with the Congress. Well, I can only say that where matters of such a serious character are concerned, the Government would be betraying the cause of the country if it failed to take necessary steps because of any party considerations or in a partisan spirit.

The question was whether President's rule would have produced better results, whether, in the circumstances in which Assam was then placed and in which we had to function there, President's rule would have proved wholesome and beneficial. I may state here that all parties in Assam were opposed to President's rule. Not a single party wanted it, and the position would have been further complicated, if the President could not get the assistance or cooperation of any one in Assam. It would have only led to further embitterment of relations, greater sulenness on the part of those who had been working for the restoration of good feeling, and resulted in further deterioration in the situation. How could then the President function better?

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It has also to be remembered that this violence was brought under control on the 12th. By the 12th it had almost ceased to exist. It lasted for eight days. Could the President have brought about a speedier restoration, brought about conditions which would have resulted in greater harmony or lesser tension? This would necessarily have led to estrangement of every section in Assam, as no one was prepared to stand by the President if the President took up the administration in his own hands. Only the Governor and a few officers associated with him could not have been very effective.

Besides, the real difficulty in Assam was the system of administration, the weakness of the administrative machinery, and that could not be remedied in a day or two. We could not tone up the administration just by a magic wand. It is an affair which necessarily takes time.

And could the President find a better man for administering the affairs of Assam than Shri Chaliha? Shri Chaliha enjoyed the confidence of everybody. Even in this House every one has spoken highly about his impartiality, about his liberal outlook and about his desire to do justice to one and all. In the circumstances, what better agency could have been provided for this purpose?

Then, whenever you introduce President's rule there is a demand by the people of the State for it, and there is often a report by the Governor that President's rule is necessary. In the case of Kerala, I may just state that we had received suggestions to this effect from the Governor long before we introduced President's rule there. We did not take up the reins of administration forthwith.

I am not inclined to speak in a polemical way, but Shri H. N. Mukerjee said that we had perhaps avidly pounced upon the occasion of the pretext that we found for introducing President's rule in Kerala, while we were reluctant to do so in Assam. President's rule in Kerala was forced upon us. We did not want President's rule, but the stage was reached when the Kerala Government itself did not want to have the responsibility of facing the ugly situation that had grown up in the State.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Basirhat): They are capable.

Shri G. B. Pant: They are capable, I do not deny that, but there are moments when even capable men find themselves helpless.

Acharya Kripalani (Sitamarhi): It has happened in Assam.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Especially if they are non-Congress.

Shri G. B. Pant: As I was submitting, there was no desire to make any discrimination. In fact, when the Punjab legislature had a majority, and a big majority, of Congressmen, the President imposed President's rule on Punjab.

12.30 hrs.

And when the Central Government here is also associated with the Congress, even if we take over President's rule from a Congress State ourselves, the power does not go over to others. We in the Centre have little control over the States; if we were anxious to have more power ourselves and also to help the Congress thereby or to maintain the prestige of the Congress, we could easily do so, because the Centre does not owe allegiance to any other party. What was done at the time was not in any way actuated by any partisan motives, and I still think sometimes people can be wise after the event. I do not know if I can grow wise now at this age. But even after the event, I now feel, even now, I have no doubt that it would have been wrong to impose President's rule on Assam in the circumstances in which Assam was then placed, and in which its affairs had to be administered.

So, I might respectfully submit that the Army had been alerted even before the situation became so serious on the 4th and, also thereafter, five battalions of the Army, which is an unusually powerful section of the Army, were placed at the disposal of the civil power from time to time. That was the occasion for strengthening the hands of the State Government and giving them a maximum striking force. Besides that, the Assam Rifles was also placed at the service of the State Government. So, so far as the force that is needed in the circumstances is concerned, the Centre did more than anyone could have expected or more than anyone could have demanded. Besides that, on the 10th, I think, the Defence Minister himself went to Assam, and he conferred with the Governor and other officers there, and satisfied himself about the arrangements that had been made in this connection.

Thereafter, as hon. Members are aware, the Prime Minister himself went on the 17th to Assam and stayed there for three days and returned on 'he 20th. He visited most of the affected areas, and he met, I think, not only big crowds, but the representatives of a number of organisations and also discussed matters with them. Thereafter, the Law Minister went to Assam and spent, I think, ten or twelve days in Assam. So far as non-official are concerned, the president of the Congress has also gone there on the 10th, and Mrs. Indira Gandhi has also accompanied the Prime Minister; she had gone on a peace mission. And, so the Central Ministers were taking the due interest, I would not say that they were doing more than what the situation demanded, but none can say that they did less than what they could do. They also went there, and they did what they could, to assess the situation and to see that mainly the process of rehabilitation was accelerated, tension was relieved, and so far as possible, goodwill and mutual confidence were restored. They made efforts in that direction. We have now to continue that process.

On his return from his tour, the Prime Minister gave further thought to the problem. And when Shri A. K. Sen came back he made some definite proposals, which were accepted, that the Army should be deployed for constructing houses for the persons who had left Assam. He also suggested that some Central Minister should help the Government of Assam in a co-operative way, in order to expedite and accelerate the process of rehabilitation and restoration of confidence. And he also suggested that some sort of an enquiry would be necessary. Thereaf er, this matter has been constantly before Government. We have been doing all we can.

We have received the report of the Parliamentary Delegation, to which I have just made a reference. Hon. Members may have seen the policy statement issued by the Government of Assam. The Government has undertaken to take effective measures for the punishment of the guilty, regardless of the position that they might be occupying and regardless of their party affiliations. They have also undertaken to punish the officers who may have been guilty of any partisanship, negligence or any other lapse in this respect. They have also decided to take action against the students so that the indiscipline that has been prevailing there may come to an end. As hon. Members might be aware, the students' action committee or some other organisation there had announced their intention of having a Demand Week from the first of September. The Government there dissuaded several of the local unions from taking part in it, and they withdrew from the movement.

About others, they issued orders under section 144 Cr.P.C. and did not allow any meeting to be held or any procession to be formed and also arrested a number of students—perhaps 9. I refer to this, as there has been some controversy about the

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necessity or expediency or advisability of curbing the activities of the students. Nobody wants to put any fetters on the students. Nobody wants to interfere with their legitimate cultural, academic or other activities. They must have free scope to grow so that their personality may flower fully and they reach the age of maturity. But one has to take the circumstances into account and then to devise such measures as may be necessary for achieving the immediate purpose. What will have to be done later, is a different thing. Perhaps this might be one of the questions that the Committee of the Commission that is intended to be appointed in order to go into the basic causes may like to consider. But for the present, immediate action, wherever necessary, has to be and should be taken. Otherwise, the difficulties will be aggravated and complications will arise.

After all, it cannot be ignored that the students there are a fine lot whom I had occasion to address in the University more than once. If they go out of hand, their careers will be ruined. The policy statement also says that those among the students who have been guilty of violence will not be given any job in the Government. That is also one of the declarations made by the Government of Assam.

There are other proposals contained therein, one of them concerning the Press. There has been some controversy about it. Again, no one wants to fetter the freedom of the Press. We brought forward a Bill for the repeal of the Press (Objectionable Matter) Act sometimes ago so that there might not be the least interference with the Press in any way and at any place. That is so far as fetters that may be of a comprehensive type and that may affect the expression of views or the publication of correct news are concerned, but where communal disturbances are concerned, where incitement to violence is concerned, it is worth considering whether some steps would or would not be necessary. That too might, I think, be for the Press representatives and the Press Club or whatever it is called—they have got a number of organisations—to consider whether they should not take some steps, or whether this question too might be—whatever steps may be taken in the meantime—finally considered by the Committee (*Interruptions*).

An Hon. Member: There is a power failure. We cannot hear.

Shri G. B. Pant: I do not think you will lose much.

So I should think that will also be a matter for further consideration. The present attitude of Government towards this question has already been stated by the Prime Minister.

We are extremely sorry that the people who had gone from Assam to West Bengal have not yet found it advisable to go back. There is panic; there is a sense of fear. We have to work not only for the restoration of law and order, but for the restoration of normal conditions, of an atmosphere in which these people may feel reassured, go back to their homes and work there freely without any sort of hinderance or without any sort of apprehension.

The question is essentially psychological and it has to be dealt with in that manner. I hope the friends from Assam who have expressed their sorrow over these happenings will use their influence, will exert themselvses and see that this feeling of distrust, panic and fear is removed. I trust that the Government of West Bengal will also co-operate in this task which concerns both Governments. The Central Government has already taken some measures. As I submitted, the Army has been asked to build houses in compact areas. Most of the houses that have been burnt cannot perhaps be handled by the Army people, but wherever there are compact areas and *pucca* houses, they may do whatever they can.

There is also a demand that financial assistance should be given to the Government of Assam for the relief and rehabilitation of these people. It should be given and the Central Government will, I presume, be prepared to give necessary assistance, so that not only their houses may be rebuilt but also they may be able to start afresh and have their tools, instruments and other things and also such allowance as may be necessary for their maintenance for some time. Other measures also will be taken and I hope one of the Central Ministers will be requested to go to Assam —and also to Bengal at times—to assist and co-operate in the real task which lies before us. So far as the State of Assam is concerned, many of the people who had gone away due to panic had come back to their homes. I understand about half of the houses that had been burnt had been reconstructed with the help of the local people and—the House would be glad to note—also of the students in a number of places. So far as the camps in Assam are concerned, I think the problem is not very serious and the people will be moving to their houses. In Bengal, I understand that about 45,000 are in camps or with friends. That is an enormous number. Bengal is already over-strained and it cannot afford to take more refugees. So, arrangements would have to be made for their speedy rehabilitation and the co-operation of the two Governments and the assistance of the Central Government will, I hope, enable them to go back to their homes. They have been either driven away from their hearths and homes or they have left them in a state of panic and fear. It is the duty of the people living there to see that such feelings do not continue any further and that all feel that their homes are their homes and all those who live in Assam, whether they speak Bengali or they belong to the tribals are as much citizens of Assam as those who speak Assamese. This problem does not in any way affect the basic position, whichever language one speaks. These Bengali citizens have, I understand, in many cases, been living for generations in Assam. But whether one is an old resident or not, under our Constitution everyone is free to go to any part of the country, to stay there and to take up any lawful avocation in the country. That is a right which every citizen is entitled to enjoy and as the hon. Members may remember sometime ago we passed a law to the effect that the domicile rule will not be allowed to stand in the way of applicants for appointments in States; that even a person living outside a State will be free to seek employment in another State. While we have passed such a law, there is now difficulty even within the State itself and the people who have been living there or who are living there are treated in a different manner. So, the basic principles which have guided us so far and on which our entire policy and our Constitution are based and the directions which it contains have to be kept in view by everyone.

The Committee of Members of Parliament have made a series of recommendations and those constructive recommendations will all be sympathetically considered and perhaps to a large extent accepted by the Government. But I am not in a position to say anything very definite. Their recommendations seem to be quite reasonable and deserve very earnest consideration.

I beg to state in the end that we have to remember that in this country when we are faced with grave problems, there could be no room for petty squabbles. Our minds are growing narrower and narrower and our outlook perhaps more and more illiberal. If this process continues the very foundations of our society

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and of our independence will be eroded. Nothing will endanger the security, integrity and safety of India more than such developments inside the country. So, I hope in dealing with problems of this character in the States the authorities concerned will remember that they have to act in accordance with the principles that have been laid down in the Constitution and the directions that may be issued by the Government in conformity with these principles.

Shri Amjad Ali (Dhubri): May I seek a clarification from the hon. Minister? On page 11 of the Report of this Delegation on Assam disturbance it is said:

> "(The Deputy Commissioner) promulgated a curfew order prohibiting persons to come out of their homes from dusk to dawn without permission. The curfew order was resented by almost all sections of the people of the town of Gauhati. The President of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee and others got into touch with the Chief Minister, who instructed the Deputy Commissioner to hear the public men and do the needful. Accordingly, the Deputy Commissioner called the leaders of all the political parties present at Gauhati. Faced with a united opposition, the Deputy Commissioner lifted the curfew."

So, it was due to the united opposition as well as the united demand of all the political parties in Assam that the curfew was lifted. But if I heard the hon. Home Minister correctly, he was heard to say that the curfew was withdrawn at the instance of an hon. Member of this House. This report has been submitted by persons who made an on-the-spot enquiry and collected facts. Therefore, I want to know how could the Home Minister be briefed otherwise to say something different from the Report itself?

13 hrs.

Shri G. B. Pant: The statement that is made in the report is not inconsistent with what I said. Other leaders can be moved by one who is very keen and then join in making a general request.

Shri Hem Barua (Gauhati): Sir, I rise on a point of personal explanation. The Home Minister said: "An hon. Member in this House". If my guess is correct, Sir, he possibly meant me. Now, there have been a lot of allegations against me on this score. Some papers have even gone to the extent of saying that here was a man who took 2,000 students with him and threatened to violate the curfew order. This was almost said by Shri C. K. Bhattacharya also on the opening day of this Session when he was speaking on the adjournment motion. Sir, I want to tell you the whole position. When this curfew was imposed on the citizens of Gauhati no citizen of Gauhati agreed to it, and that is in the report also. Even before the Deputy Commissioner summoned the public men to meet him in a conference to discuss this matter, there was the Gauhati Bar Library Delegation. They also met the Deputy Commissioner and tried to convince him of the futility of the order. Then there was a meeting. I was also summoned to that meeting. When I walked into the residence of the Deputy Commissioner, Sir, I was all alone, I did not have anybody with me. Except my shadow nobody followed me. But, there, if I remember correctly, I saw the President of the Congress Party, the Secretary of the Congress Party, a Member of the Upper House and some other people also. We discussed the matter. The Deputy Commissioner got a ring from the Chief Minister from Shillong—that is my information—and the D.I.G., the S.P. and the D.C. were present. We discussed the matter. Our line of argument was that it was no use clamping down Section 144 and the curfew order simultaneously, because we felt that that would arrest the democratic functioning of all political parties. As a matter of fact, it happened. If I may tell you, all political parties there were immobilised from action because of these two restrictive orders. We asked them to give a fair trial to Section 144 and enforce it strictly. As a matter of fact, Section 144 was not enforced at all, it was only on paper. We asked them to enforce Section 144 strictly and give it a fair trial and if they found that Section 144 did not work then alone they should come down with the curfew order on the people. All public men, including the President of the Assam Congress who was present there, supported this. Then the D.I.G., the S.P. and D.C. went inside for a few minutes to have some high level consultations. They came out and said that they were prepared to withdraw the curfew order.

Sir, I never challenged the authority saying that I would take out a procession and defy the curfew order. I am not a mad man and I do not propose to be a mad man.

Shri Sadhan Gupta (Calcutta—East): Sir, I want one clarification. What stood in the way of the Centre asking the Army to fan out and protect the population on their own initiative instead of placing it at the disposal of the civil power which simply did not exist in those days?

Shri G. B. Pant: That will only lead to confusion and not to any improvement in the situation. Some person has to be in charge to manage the affairs.

An Hon. Member: We could hear not even a word.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister said that it would have led to confusion instead of helping the situation.

Some hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Shri Hazarika—

Shri Radhelal Vyas (Ujjain): Sir, you were kind enough to allot enough time for discussion on this subject. So far only hon. Members from Bengal and some Members from Assam have participated in it. It is a matter of concern to all of us. Therefore, if you can give some time to other Members also, Members from other States also, we can throw some light on the problem and contribute to the deliberations.

Shri Ansar Harvani (Fatehpur): It is an All-India question. Members from other States may also be given a chance to participate in this debate.

Shri N. C. Laskar (Cachar—Reserved—Sch. Castes): Sir, I am the only Bengali Member from Assam.

Mr. Speaker: I am trying to distribute the time.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of External Affairs (Shri J. N. Hazarika): Sir, after all that has been said about the Assam tragedy by the hon. Prime Minister, by the hon. Home Minister and also by the Law Minister, I do not think I should say anything more. Yet, Sir, I could not hold my temptation from saying something of what I have myself felt.

An Hon. Member: We cannot hear anything.

Mr. Speaker: Let him speak a little more loudly. The hall is small. Can't he speak a little louder?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Many hon. Members are moving out.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): Sir, give a chance to those who have a loud voice.

Mr. Speaker: If there is less noise in the House I think anybody can be heard.

Shri J. N. Hazarika: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was saying that after having heard so much from the Prime Minis-

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ter, the Home Minister and the Law Minister, there is nothing much left for me to say.

An Hon. Member: Then why speak?

Shri J. N. Hazarika: But, Sir, I could not hold my temptation from saying something about what I have felt and what I have seen in Assam. I happened to be in my constituency—Dibrugarh—when certain things happened in that part of the country. I think the impact of the tragedy can be better seen than described. The Law Minister has described what he saw in Assam. I do not think I can describe those happenings in any better way.

At the same time, while I stand here to speak a few words on the subject, I wish to first express my heart-left condolences over those who have laid their lives during the disturbances. At the same time, Sir, I also express my shame for the atrocities committed on the women and children. I am referring to the atrocities and murders committed not only in Assam but also in some parts of West Bengal.

Shrimati Renuka Ray (Malda): What was alleged to be due in some parts of West Bengal was quelled within six hours and did not include any crimes against women.

Shri J. N. Hazarika: I said, certain parts of West Bengal.

Shrimati Renuka Ray: Bengalis were shot down and killed by the police to protect lives of the Assamese.

Shri J. N. Hazarika: The description given by the Law Minister is quite correct. Sir, I came by train in the last week of July. I did not fly because I wanted to see actually how many people were going away to West Bengal. I wanted to see for myself what was the influx to North Bengal from Assam. It was really to my disappointment and sorrow, when I saw the things happening. Hundreds of people were coming actually till the day I went to Siliguri. I was also told by many persons that actually law and order was not being maintained in Bengal even. I wanted to see for myself whether that was also correct. I found that though law and order was reviving, actually, the confidence of the Bengali people who fled from Assam was not revived. They were coming out. It is true that it has been a big tragedy. But we must also not forget the factors due to which this tragedy has occurred.

The day before yesterday we were advised that we must not indulge in acrimonious remarks, etc., during this debate. But I was disappointed yesterday when I heard our tribal friend, Shri Hynniewta, who made so many acrimonious remarks and he inflamed the passions of almost everybody in the House. He gave certain figures which, according to me, are not correct. I shall come to the details about the figures later.

I have gone through the report submitted by Shri A. P. Jain and others. I find that it is a very impartial and a very correct report of the things which have happened there. I completely agree with the report. I do not understand why some hon. Members are not giving justice to this report. The report says that the integrity of the country is the first and foremost thing to be protected by all of us and it is from that point of view that we should review the situation in Assam. We should first try to get the people back to Assam and see that they are brought under normal conditions of living, so that they join their own professions. With this end in view and also with the object that in future such things may not happen in Assam, this report has been given, and it has reviewed the whole thing in an objective manner. I support this report and I hope the House will consider and reconsider this report. I do not think any report can be made, which could be more impartial than this one.

I am really surprised to see so many things coming in the press and about which many complaints have also been written to the Prime Minister. I want to tell the House that the reports which came in the press of Calcutta after the Prime Minister's visit were almost incorrect and distorted. Had the press not been in the scene of the tragedy, probably many things would not have happened aftewards. At least 50 per cent, if not the entire influx of refugees, was stopped. If the press do not publish these things objectively and if they continue to publish objectionable things—of course, the people were in a pitiable condition......

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Does he mean to say that everything that appeared in the press is all exaggeration?

Shri J. N. Hazarika: I was giving one instance where......

Shri Atulya Ghosh (Asansol): Not exaggeration. He said they were incorrect.

Shri J. N. Hazarika: For instance, the official press note said:

> "On the night of August 20, some miscreants set fire to a katcha thatched house in the outskirts of the Fojai town about 33 miles away from Nowgong. The police immediately rushed to the spot and put down the fire with the help of the local people . . ."

This is a case where the report which was published, was published in a distorted manner. I am giving only one or two instances.

Shri Bimal Ghose (Barrackpore): He was mentioning 20th August and so on. These disturbances occurred much earlier. So, how could the incidents which he referred to contribute to the disturbances?

Shri J. N. Hazarika: The hon. Member has not contradicted the disturbances as having occurred, as such. But there are certain reports which appeared in the papers and which were baseless. I am giving another instance where the Assam Government issued a press note which says as follows:

> "Government's attention has been drawn to the news items published in the *Hindusthan Standard* of August 6 last alleging that a brother and a sister of one Sisir Kumar Ghosh were murdered on July 16 and 17 last . . .".

Some Hon. Members: August 6th?

Mr. Speaker: Let us wait and listen to him.

Shri J. N. Hazarika: The press note went on to say:

> "It was further alleged in the said report that an evacuee camp at Sonaribali near Nowgong was attacked on 1st July, 1960. The above reports are absolutely false and without any foundation."

It is the press note published by the Government of Assam.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: The whole place was burnt down.

Shri Atulya Ghosh: I was associated with a newspaper in Calcutta. After the return of the Prime Minister, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary seems to say that all the reports published in the press were incorrect. I would like to be enlightened about the dates and the names of the papers.

Shrimati Renuka Ray: If these instances, one or two instances, show that the reports were incorrect, what about the facts? It was only through

[Shrimati Renuka Ray]

the press that this country came to know that such and such a thing has happened.

Shri J. N. Hazarika: I stand corrected. I am not saying that all the reports published after the Prime Minister's return are incorrect. (*Interruptions*).

Mr. Speaker: The Parliamentary Secretary only says that the Assam Government has declared certain reports to be incorrect. There may be a number of articles that come in the press. Nobody can vouchsafe that every report is correct. All that he says is that there are some exaggerations here and there. He is not trying to minimise the gravity of what has happened. He says that here and there, there are some exaggerations also. I do not think anybody will say that it cannot be an exaggeration.

Shrimati Renuka Ray: The press has done many things.... (*Interruptions*).

Mr. Speaker: Does any hon. Member stand guarantee for every section of the press in this country?

Shrimati Renuka Ray: It was through the press of West Bengal that we came to know that these things were happening (*Interruptions*).

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya (West Dinajpur): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary ought to say that the press note issued by the Assam Government itself was found to be incorrect later. He ought to say that.

Shri J. N. Hazarika: We have to go on the facts supplied by the Government.

Shrimati Mafida Ahmed: Apart from the newspaper reports,........

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. I shall allow her later.

Shri J. N. Hazarika: This is not a conspiracy against the Bengali-speaking people of Assam. The Assamese-speaking people were living with the Bengalis for centuries, and though there may be some grievances here and there, it is not that this uprising took place because of such grievances. As the Home Minister said, the immediate cause was the language issue. For the information of the House, I can say that this language movement as such was a non-violent one. It is of course very popular in Assam in every hearth and home of the Brahmaputra valley and they tell us that they have the right to declare Assamese as the State language.

Some hon. Members have referred to the happenings during the regime of the late Gopinath Bardolai and also during the regime of Shri Bishnuram Mehdi. I was really surprised that an hon. Member has referred to the late Bardolai as having said something many years ago, which is based on a particular pamphlet; that matter is already before the House, in the Privileges Committee. What probably the late Bardolai meant at that time by saying "Assam for Assamese" was that Assam was meant for all. It is for Assamese-speaking Assamese and Bangali-speaking Assamese.

The Assam Congress Committee passed a resolution that Assamese should be the State language of Assam and it should be brought about by peaceful and legislative methods. In the things that occurred—the acts of violence and outburst—only certain groups of people were associated with it; we were not associated with it. Maybe here and there may be somebody in the party or there may be a leader elsewhere associated with it and those people might have been indulging in such things, but not all political parties. We never did such a thing.

I went from Jornat to Dibrugarh on the 22nd June. My car was stopped six times and I found four or five processions on the way. They stopped my car, but I did not see any violence occurring there. All the parties, including Bengalis took part in the procession. Had they known that it was for violence, probably they would not have joined it. So, it was not premeditated.

It is a very big tragedy that happened and we are very sorry for that. Yesterday Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri said that he was bringing the Assam Government as well as the Government of India to the dock. But, Shri Hynniewta impeached the Assam Government and the people and attacked them left and right. I do not think the Assamese people and the Assam Government deserve this. Before the proceedings are completed, they gave this judgment, whereas the Home Minister has said that all these things shall be considered very carefully and fully.

I quite agree that rehabilitation should take place as early as possible and our brothers and sisters who have left Assam should come back. This is quite a practical suggestion and we also want it. But at the same time, we must create normal conditions in Assam itself. It is not by President's rule, as the Home Minister has said. Also, it is not by punishing all the people. Some of them may be culprits, but the majority are not. Only those who indulged in violence should be punished.

Some hon. Members referred to the book *Mati Kar*. How many can read that book? 85 per cent of the people are illiterate. I have not read that book myself. I agree this book should have been prescribed.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: The question is not about the people reading it. The question is, how did the State Government allow such a book to be circulated and how did the Central Government sleep over its circulation?

Shri J. N. Hazarika: I agree it should not have been circulated.

Take this substitute motion moved by Shri Atulya Ghosh. The Prime Minister has said yesterday that we are putting up so many tribunals and judicial committees to go to the spot and enquire about the events, and to bring the culprits to book. But if again a judicial inquiry is to be set up, it will be just like trying for an offence twice. I cannot agree to a judicial inquiry that is proposed in some of the substitute motions.

So many people challenged the census reports. If you see the census reports, you will know the real figure of the Assamese people. To give an example, in 1881, there were 13,61,359 Assamese-speaking people in Assam. In 1951, it became 49,14,199. So, from 13 lakhs it has increased to 49 lakhs. Here and there there may be a mistake, but on the whole, this figure is correct.

Like our Prime Minister, our Chief Minister is very very sympathetic to the minorities. But in this democracy, we should also have something of our own. There should be a home for Assamese language, just as every other language has in every other State. You must give opportunities to the minorities, but can I not have the right to say that Assamese shall be the State language of Assam?

I want to say that all these things must be considered before we consider the suggestions made by various hon. Members. We must also see the population figures and other things, before we come to any conclusion as to what actually should be the future of the state of Assam, whether it should be bilingual, multilingual, etc. Shri Guha said that Assam should be a bilingual State. He also said that Bengali should be the State language. (*Interruption*).

[Shri J. N. Hazarika]

Whatever suggestion is made in this report, I completely agree with it. In addition, I want to say, let there be a zonal police system. The Home Minister is already in charge of zonal councils. He can consider this suggestion also. Let us have a zonal police system.

With these words, I agree with the report and I oppose the substitute motion moved by Shri Atulya Ghosh and some others.

Shrimati Renuka Ray: On a point of clarification. Does such a speech from the treasury benches represent the views of the Government? Otherwise, how can such a speech be made in this House by a Minister of the Government? Can such a speech be made unless it is the considered viewpoint of the treasury benches?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: The hon. Member is misinformed; he is not a Minister.

Shrimati Renuka Ray: He is a Parliamentary Secretary.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: The hon. Member said that Shri Bardoloi meant by his policy statement that Assam was for the Assamese-speaking Assamese and Bengali-speaking Assamese. In fact, it was not. After Assam made a present of Sylhet to Pakistan in order to get rid of the Bengali-speaking areas, 1,800 Indian officers opted out for India at the request of the Indian Government. When these officers approached Shri Bardoloi for services there, what Shri Bardoloi said was "the newly accepted policy of my Government is Assam for the Assamese", and those officers were sent away. Some of them went to the High Court, some to the Supreme Court and got a remedy but the others were sent away.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: Is he making a speech? He has already made it.

Mr. Speaker: Now Shri Laskar.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: We are all interested in this debate.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Members from all parts should be given opportunities to speak. There is no question of Assamese or Bengalis in this debate.

Mr. Speaker: After Shri Laskar, I will give opportunity to others.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: We are all interested in this affair.

Shri Radhelal Vyas: We are more interested.

Mr. Speaker: Everybody is interested in this matter. We find that facts stated by one hon. Member is contradicted by another hon. Member. This hon. Member comes from Cachar, and he is a Bengali gentleman. I, therefore, thought that he must be heard in preference to others. After hearing this hon. Member I will come to the left side.

पंडित ब्रज नारायण ब्रजेश (शिवपुरी) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं असम हो कर आया हूं और प्रतीक्षा कर रहा हूं।

Mr. Speaker: Every hon. Member will be heard. Now I am calling the hon. Member from Cachar.

Shri N. C. Laskar: I am the only Bengali Member from Assam.

Shri Bimal Ghose: Bengali-speaking Member.

Shri N. C. Laskar: My hon. friend here told us that he does not know the difference between the Assamese-speaking Assamese and the Bengali-speaking Assamese, because there is no difference between them. So, I may tell him that I am a Bengali living in Assam, inhabiting in Assam, and I am the only Bengali member from Assam State. Six Assamese friends took part in the debate, and they levelled so many charges against the Cachar people on this Assam issue. We have been told that the Bengalis of Assam do not consider Assam as their home and they look forward to West Bengal for inspiration. Then it is said that the inflammatory speeches in the Language Conference held on 3rd July at Silchar are responsible for these disturbances and atrocities. Then, it is said that the Bengalis are occupying high positions in the services. So many charges have been levelled against the Bengalis in Assam and since I have to give replies to all those points, I crave your indulgence to give me more time.

Mr. Speaker: No, only 15 minutes.

Shri N. C. Laskar: As a Member of this House from Assam State, I feel myself ashamed of the atrocities and the tragic happenings during the language riots in the Brahmaputra valley with arson, looting, murder, rape and other things, as a result of which about 45,000 Bengali people migrated from the Brahmaputra Valley to West Bengal. About 10,000 refugees migrated from the Brahmaputra Valley to my district, because my district, Cachar, is a Bengali-speaking district. Although the six districts of the Brahmaputra Valley are the worst affected areas, my district in Assam is not affected directly, because not a single Bengali was driven out from my district. But I may tell you that three persons of my district were brutally murdered in the Brahmaputra Valley, many were tortured and 10,000 refugees have migrated from Brahmaputra Valley to my district.

Shrimati Mafida Ahmed: I think the figure is not correct. The official figure is 5,000 or so.

Shri N. C. Laskar: About 4,000 to 5,000 people with their friends and people are still coming to my district, because law and order situation has broken down in the Brahmaputra Valley and panic is still prevailing there. So, I cannot say exactly how many people are now living in my district. On this occasion, I offer my heartfelt gratefulness to the Assamese friends who gave protection to the Bengali riot-stricken people at the time of these riots. They gave them protection and food, and I offer my congratulations to them for that.

It is a fact that the causes of these disturbances are deep-rooted and language is only one of the many factors. So, some background knowledge is necessary to understand this. Assam Valley is linguistically divided into two parts—Brahmaputra Valley, that is, Assamese-speaking area and the non-Assamese speaking area, that is, the Hill districts and district of Cachar. In the Brahmaputra Valley the total population is about 6·7 million out of which, according to the 1941 census, 49 lakhs are Assamese-speaking.

Mr. Speaker: All these matters are contained in the Report. The cause of the discontent was that originally the Assamese were not given their due place. The language issue is another factor. If the hon. Member has anything new which has not yet been brought before the House, he may do so. Otherwise, I would like to call some other hon. Member, as a number of hon. Members want to participate in this debate.

Shri N. C. Laskar: The Cachar people strongly protest against the imposition or the introduction of Assamese as the State language. I can prove before you with facts and figures that the Assamese are in the minority in Assam.

Shrimati Mafida Ahmed: No question of imposition.

Shri N. C. Laskar: I meant introduction.

Shrimati Mafida Ahmed: Regarding the introduction of the State language, here is the Assam Congress resolution. I crave your indulgence to read the resolution.

Mr. Speaker: It is already there. People have read it.

Shri N. C. Laskar: Regarding this resolution, the Cachar district representatives protested against this resolution. I can show you from the census figures how the Assamese population is inflated in 1951 census ....(*Interruptions*).

Shrimati Mafida Ahmed: The resolution reads....(*Interruptions*).

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. I am afraid, she is irresistible now.

Shri N. C. Laskar: The Assam population in 1931 was 19,19,846. In 1941 it was 22,41,538 and in 1951 it was 49,72,493. That is, an increase of 150 per cent. of Assamese population.

Mr. Speaker: That has been referred to in the Report itself.

Shri N. C. Laskar: I am referring to the Census Report.

Mr. Speaker: That is all in the Report. I think the hon. Member has nothing new to add.

Shri N. C. Laskar: I have something to say.

Mr. Speaker: What is that?

Shri N. C. Laskar: What is the population of Bengalis in Assam? In 1947 it was 45,26,528. By the partition, Sylhet district has gone to Pakistan. Therefore, 25 lakhs Bengalis can be deducted from that. It will come to about 28 lakhs.

Mr. Speaker: I may clarify the point. We are not here concerned with as to which community is in a majority or in a minority or whether it is right to have Assamese as the State language or not. Whatever might have happened, is it right that a few people should take the law in their own hands and enact the tragedy that has occurred? If the hon. Member wants to throw light on how to redress the grievance, I will allow him. Whether one is a Bengali-speaking Assamese or is an Assamese-speaking Assamese or speaks any other language, whoever is supposed to be a permanent resident there is an Assamese. Now, what are the steps that are to be taken so that they should return? How are we to find the guilty and reprimand them who have committed it? Is it necessary to have an enquiry immediately? These are the points on which some light may be thrown. I am afraid the hon. Member has nothing more to add. Shri Mahanty.

Shri N. C. Laskar: Sir I have to add......(*Interruption*).

Mr. Speaker: He must resume his seat. Shri Mahanty.

Shri Bimal Ghose *rose*—

Shri Mahanty (Dhenkanal): Mr. Speaker Sir, the situation in Assam has been distressing and disturbing enough and it has shocked the conscience of the Nation. Standing between aggrieved West Bengal and maligned Assam....(*Interruption*).

Shri Tyagi: Sir, the speakers must be given the freedom of their speech. It is too bad that some hon. friends from Bengal always criticise any speaker if he says anything criticising them. Let them have patience. Parliament must give protection to the speakers.

Shri Mahanty: Sir, my little time is running out.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members must be observing the amount of passion that is being exhibited. Therefore they need not use such expressions as 'maligned Assam', for those who have suffered will say that and others will justify. I expect hon. Members who do not belong to Assam or Bengal to try to pacify both as much as possible instead of calling this or that. The word 'maligned' need not have been used.

Shri Mahanty: When I said 'aggrieved Bengal' there was no protest. When I said 'maligned Assam' there was a protest. What I say is that certain State has been maligned and her people as rowdies and violent etc. Therefore I am delivering no judgment for the time being. I am merely stating a fact as it is, standing between maligned Assam and aggrieved Bengal, a picture comes to my mind. It was another kind of an antediluvian inundation.... (*Interruption*).

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya: We are discussing the Assam situation. Why does he bring in West Bengal?

Shri Tyagi: Parliament must give protection.

Shri Mahanty: I take strong exception to this kind of a remark. If he wants to interrupt, let him interrupt me more intelligently. I had put up with his speech. I had never interrupted him. If he wants to interrupt me, let him interrupt with a little more intelligence.

As I was saying it was a kind of antediluvian, inundation of passions and frenzy which had washed away all the frontiers and landmarks of political values and ideals. The enormity of the situation will be realised from the fact that the Assamese colleagues of a Bengali office-bearer of political party which professes progressivism had even to murder him who happened to be Bengali-speaking (*Shame, shame*). It is indeed shocking. But I feel, the manner and method in which the Government has chosen to bring this motion before this House has been most deplorable. I have to submit, the truncated autonomy of the State which has been haltingly guaranteed to them under the Constitution, is at stake and a premium has been put on the helplessness of the States. Why I say so is that from whatever we have heard, whatever has been submitted in course of the debate we come to the inescapable conclusion that there was a paralysis of the administration. There was no law and order. Chaos and a state of lawlessness prevailed and rowdies had taken charge of the situation. There was a failure of law and order. There was a failure of article 350B of the Constitution also which lays down certain safeguards to the minorities. These, I think, are the main gravamen of charges against the Assam administration. That has been the case.

Now I would like to know from you in all humility, as to how the Parliament can exercise jurisdiction over the affairs of a State, without going through the necessary procedures of the Constitution. I have the honour and privilege of serving this Parliament since 1952 and I can recollect the affairs of three States, namely, Punjab, PEPSU and Kerala came up before Parliament where such matters as failure of law and order provisions of the Constitution were the main gravamen of charges against the State Governments. On the first occasion we had to discuss PEPSU—Patiala; then about Punjab and the latest was Kerala. But in this case, I venture to submit—you will kindly pardon my saying so—that Government had abdicated their responsibility and passed on the troublesome baby on to your arms. In consultation with the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha you had appointed a committee. We have got full respect for that committee, but I would like to know what legal and constitutional status that committee had. The report of this committee is nothing but a scrap of paper. If there was a deterioration in the law and order situation, I would like to know in all humility what the Governor of Assam was doing. Why did he not send a report as is called for under article 355 of the Constitution. Why the other emergency provisions of the Constitution were not invoked.

Therefore, I was venturing to submit that those who value the autonomy of the States have felt much aggrieved by the manner and method in which the question has been brought. I believe when the hon.

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Mover of this motion comes to wind up this debate he will allay our fears and assure us that though whatever has been done has been extra-constitutional, it should not be repeated once again. If the Centre feels that there has been a violation of the provisions of the Constitution, we would expect the Centre to act and not to abdicate its responsibility and to throw the onus on the hon. Speaker of the Parliament.

Mr. Speaker: May I ask a question of the hon. Member? This thing occurred some time in July last. Then there was a paralysis of the Government. Today the Government is able to take care of the situation. Does he want to say that we ought not to discuss even that situation there—a situation that occurred when this Government ought to have interfered according to some? Today there is no need for that interference. Therefore is it the opinion of the hon. Member that this Parliament which has got the right to interfere in proper cases ought not to refer to this?

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh (Sasaram): They must interfere.

Mr. Speaker: Therefore this motion ought not to have been brought? Are we not abdicating our right to judge what has occurred and give instructions now as to what should be done?

Shri Mahanty: I am grateful for your query. Times without number we had the misfortune or the fortune of raising certain matters which were also equally consequential.

An Hon. Member: Not you.

Shri Mahanty: I am not prepared to abide by your judgment. I am giving my opinion.

Mr. Speaker: Anyhow, it has been admitted. We have gone on. What is the suggestion?

Shri Mahanty: I am making the suggestion that we must pay certain attention to certain proprieties of the Constitution. If we have the luxury of having a written Constitution, we must also pay for it. There is no escape from that.

The second point that I want to make is this. Every dark cloud has its silver lining and the holocaust in Assam has its silver lining too, inasmuch as it highlights or focuses the nation's attention to certain aspects which go to the very root of our national unity. Number one is the census. Charges and counter-charges are being made obout the manipulation of the census figures. It has not been done in Assam alone. Unless the Census Superintendents and the Home Minister take particular care, I can tell you, there will be many areas of conflict on this account. It will not be confined to Assam alone. You may find it in Bihar, you may find it in Orissa and in many other places. My West Bengal friends will excuse me, if they look at the Census figures for Midnapore, which was predominantly Oriya somewhere in the beginning of this century, through successive census operations, from a few lakhs, they have been reduced to 21,000 or so in the last census. I do not blame them. The Oriya speaking people are also facing the same situation in Bihar. I say, not in any bitterness, but in all humility, in a spirit of appeal, though census features in the Concurrent List, though it is a joint charge of the Centre, the Centre's responsibility is discharged by merely sanctioning the expenditure and paying the money. The entire work is consigned to State level, where a kind of chauvinism is ruling. Therefore, it is time enough that the hon. Home Minister takes it into his head that something should be done in this regard. The Census organisation should be streamlined and there should be no occasion for anybody to feel that they have had a raw deal.

Then, about minority rights. You will again pardon my saying that I feel there has been a paralysis not only in Assam, there has been also paralysis in will and determination to function also in other parts. Under article 350B, the Linguistic Minorities Commissioner has been appointed. I would like to know this in all humility. Two reports have been submitted by the Linguistic Minorities Commissioner. Here, all these allegations have been made about the Bengali linguistic minorities and of the treatment meted out to them. I would like to know why not a single line has appeared about the Bengali minority in the two reports submitted by the Linguistic Minority Commissioner. Articles 350B says that the Linguistic Minorities Commissioner's machinery, his authority will be invoked only on the direction of the President. Whenever the President directs that a particular linguistic minority has been undergoing any kind of difficulties their allegations need enquiry and investigation, then, the machinery of the Linguistic Minorities Commissioner is invoked.

Shri A. P. Jain (Saharanpur): That is not correct.

Shri Mahanty: I have not got the Constitution with me. But my hon. friend may go through it.

Shri A. P. Jain: I have gone through it.

Mr. Speaker: He may develop his argument.

Shri Mahanty: This will be an important submission and it is this. If we expect the Linguistic Minorities Commissioner to function effectively and to fulfil the objectives mentioned in article 350B, he should be redeemed from the fetters of Presidential direction.

Shri A. P. Jain: May I read the provision?

> "It shall be the duty of the Special Officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under this Constitution and report to the President upon those matters at such intervals as the President may direct,...."

Shri Mahanty: That is exactly what I was saying.

Shri A. P. Jain: At such intervals as the President may direct.

> "....and the President shall cause all such reports to be laid before each...."

It is for the intervals and nothing more.

Shri Mahanty: My friend is far more, I must say, adept in these matters. The President must direct two things. He must direct and at such intervals. I am saying that if the Linguistic. Minorities Commissioner is going to function effectively, he must be redeemed from the fetters of Presidential direction. I would like to know —I cannot ask the President; it is for the Government to answer— why the President could not give a directive to the Linguistic Minorities Commissioner during all these months and years to go into the grievances of the linguistic minorities at appropriate intervals. The Linguistic Minorities Commissioner received no direction from the President. Therefore, I say, much has been said about linguistic minorities rights. My hon. friend Shri A. P. Jain has also made a recommendation. So long as the Linguistic Minorities Commissioner functions under the fetters of article 350B, and Presidential direction, he cannot function effectively.

My third submission is this. Much has been said about national unity. These are familiar speeches which we have been hearing from the junior school days. If you scratch the skin of every nationalist, you will find a rank communalist. The other day, my hon. friend Shri Jaipal Singh made a reference to Rourkela and Dandakaranya. I have never minced matters. I have never minced words. I say that all those people who talk of

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national unity should take note of what is happening there. If you become the Managing director of a Central Government concern, then, you bring your sons, grandsons, everybody from your village or your relatives' village and you pack this concern. Local people are taken as hewers of wood and drawers of water. Therefore, those who profess by national unity should note how these narrow loyalties are sustained and wherefrom they draw their sustenance and inspiration. They draw their inspiration from bread and butter which is also essential to life as all this platitudinous talk.

I am sure this is a conflict between the lower middle classes of Assam and the lower middle classes of Bengal. Over what? Over a mess of potage. The whole gamut of our tragic history comes before our eyes. We have lost the unity of India on many occasions throughout our history over messes of potages. Listening to the Home Minister, I felt as if I was listening to a chapter on Gita. It was quite edifying. It soothes our spirits. It satisfies our agonising souls. But, the problem is there. That problem has to be tackled realistically. I believe very few people are capable of facing unpleasant truth, when that truth is unpleasant and bitter.

I have got another submission to make and I will conclude. The fact can be remembered that in our ancient Hindu polity there was the "Matsya Nyaya". You are a great scholar of our ancient literature and you should have known something of this Matsya Nyaya; small fishes trying to swallow big fishes....

Mr. Speaker: No, no. Big fishes eating the small fishes. Small fish trying to eat the big fish is the expectation.

Shri Mahanty: I say big fish trying to swallow the small fish. That expectation is bred out of an inferiority complex which also breeds in the small fish to swallow the big fish. Be that as it may, it is a perverted Matsya Nyaya. The Matsya Nyaya to which I was referring was this. Even though both the big and the small fish live within one pool, even though both are vulnerable to human hunger and human depredation, still the big fish always aims at swallowing the small fish. This goes on. What pains me most is this. The Chainese aggression is taking place in our northern border. Even the N.E.F.A. areas are under Chinese threats. But what do we find here? We find a conflict of two kinds of chauvinism. Listening to some of the speeches and reading through the newspapers, one finds a sorry spectacle for which one should be ashamed, as if one section of the country was declaring a war on another section instead of both uniting to fight the common enemy.

Before I conclude, most respectfully, I submit, I am sorry that the delegation led by my eminent colleague Shri A. P. Jain should have made a recommendation to fetter the newspapers. Let me tell him that I have spent 15 long years in the service of newspapers in a humble way. The one thing that I have learnt is this, the cause of truth is served not by suppression either of falsehood or of truth. The cause of truth is best served when free competition is allowed between falsehood and truth. Both competing together for supremacy, for ascendence form the bedrocks of public opinion. If riots take place, who will be the judge, who will decide whether a particular news is tendentious or not, is false or true. I am sorry that such a recommendation should have been made. It could be made because the scope of this delegation was never limited, its purpose was never known, and to a certain extent it transcended the limitations which it should have imposed on itself. It is a weighty document that it has presented, but I believe neither the Government nor the House will take this recommendation seriously, and that all ideas will be eschewed

from the mind of the Government of muzzling the press in any way and incapacitating it from fulfilling the function expected of it.

14 hrs.

Mr. Speaker: Shri Braj Raj Singh.

An Hon. Member: Shri Brajeshwar Prasad?

Mr. Speaker: I am calling him also.

श्री ब्रज राज सिंह : अध्यक्ष महोदय, इन तीनों दिनों के वाद-विवाद के दौरान सारी बातों की तफ़सील सदन के सामने आ चुकी है। मैं उस में नहीं जाना चाहता हूं, लेकिन मैं प्रारम्भ में ही यह कह देना चाहता हूं कि आसाम में जो कुछ हुआ है, उस के कारण सारे हिन्दुस्तान का, सारी मानवता का सिर झुकता है, शर्म लगती है। यह निवेदन करते समय मैं सोचता हूं कि जब से हिन्दुस्तान आजाद हुआ है, तब से इन तेरह सालों के ज़माने में क्या हम एकता की तरफ़ बढ़े हैं, राष्ट्रीयता की तरफ बढ़े हैं, मानवता की तरफ़ बढ़े हैं, या हमने अपने को पीछे खदेड़ा है। इस सम्बन्ध में मुझे एक घटना याद आती है। जब हम आजादी की लड़ाई लड़ रहे थे, तो कानपुर शहर में हिन्दू-मुस्लिम दंगा हुआ और उस दंगे को रोकने के लिए अमर-शहीद गणेश शंकर विद्यार्थी ने अपनी जान दे दी। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं की जब आसाम में इतना कुछ हुआ, इतने लोग मारे गए, ऐसे ऐसे दुष्कृत्य किए गए, तो क्या किसी भी राजनैतिक पार्टी ने उन को रोकने के लिए अपने किसी कार्यकर्ता की जान झोमने की कोशिश की या नहीं, और अगर नहीं की, तो यह हमारे लिए—सभी राजनैतिक पार्टियों के लिए—एक बहुत शर्म की बात है। जब हिन्दुस्तान गुलाम था, तो मनुष्य की जान बचाने के लिए हम अपनी जान झोम सकते थे, लेकिन हिन्दुस्तान के आजाद होने के तेरह साल के बाद हम में वह भावना नहीं रही है, वह भावना पैदा नहीं हुई है। जब आसाम में एक वर्ग दूसरे वर्ग को मार रहा था, डस रहा था, बरबाद कर रहा था, उस की सम्पत्ति को नष्ट कर रहा था, उस वक्त किसी राजनैतिक पार्टी के नेता या कार्यकर्ता में यह हिम्मत नहीं हुई कि उस को रोकने के लिए जान की बाजी लगा दे और वह उसको रोक न सके, तो अपनी जान दे दे। जब यह नारकीय दृश्य आसाम में उपस्थित हो रहा था, जिस का वर्णन किसी भी भाषा के शब्द नहीं कर सकते,—किसी भी भाषा के शब्द हमारी शर्म को अच्छी तरह से प्रकट नहीं कर सकते—उस समय किसी भी राजनैतिक पार्टी के किसी कार्यकर्ता को उस से चोट नहीं आई, जान जाना तो दूर रहा। आखिर यह सब क्या हो गया?

एक दूसरी बात मुझे याद आती है। जब बंगाल में राष्ट्रीय सरकार नहीं थी, श्री हसन शहीद सुहरावर्दी की सरकार थी, आजादी से पहले का ज़माना था, उस वक्त भी वहां हिन्दू-मुस्लिम दंगों की इस तरह की बात उठी थी। राष्ट्र-पिता उस वक्त मौजूद थे। उन्होंने नोआखली में जा कर दोनों वर्गों, दोनों मजहबों के लोगों की भावनाओं में सामंजस्य स्थापित किया था। मुझे लगता है कि आज देश में कोई ऐसा आदमी नहीं है, जो आसाम में जा कर इस तरह की बात करे। आखिर हमारे देश को क्या हो गया है? हम कहां जा रहे हैं? हम बहुत बात करते हैं आसामी-भाषी लोगों की और बंगाली भाषी लोगों की, लेकिन कोई हिन्दुस्तानी-भाषी लोग भी इस मुल्क में हैं या नहीं, यह प्रश्न है मुल्क के सामने। यहां पर भारतीयता है या नहीं, यह प्रश्न मुल्क के सामने है। अगर हम सिर्फ आसामी या बंगाली बन कर रहेंगे, तो इस से काम चलने वाला नहीं है।

मैं पहले ही निवेदन कर चुका हूं कि जो कुछ आसाम में हुआ है, उस के लिए न सिर्फ़

[श्री ब्रजराज सिंह]

प्रान्तीय सरकार जिम्मेदार है, बल्कि उस के लिए केन्द्रीय सरकार भी बहुत बड़े रूप में जिम्मेदार है। अगर केन्द्रीय सरकार ने उपने उत्तरदायित्व को निबाहा होता, यदि उस ने अपने कर्त्तव्य का पालन किया होता, तो मेरा विश्वास है कि आसाम में यह सब न होता। लेकिन केन्द्रीय सरकार तो कुछ अक्ल सिखाती है लोगों को। प्रधान मंत्री महोदय कहते हैं कि काश्मीर में कोई कांफ्रेंस न की जाये, लेकिन यह कहने के बाद वह खुद वहां जाते हैं अपनी तपन को दूर करने के लिए, गर्मी को दूर करने के लिए और काश्मीर का आनन्द लूटने के लिए। इसी लिए आसाम के वित्त मंत्री की हिम्मत होती है वहां जाने की। और अगर वित्त मंत्री वहां जाते हैं, तो मुख्य सचिव क्यों नहीं जायेंगा ? दोनों साहब हैं। मैं यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूं कि सारे प्रशासन का ढंग ही बिगड़ गया है और आसाम में जो कुछ हुआ है, उस की सब से बड़ी जिम्मेदारी उसी पर है और आसाम में जो कुछ हुआ है, उस के कारणों और उस की पृष्ठभूमि की जांच तुरन्त की जानी चाहिए, ताकि भविष्य में हिन्दुस्तान के किसी भी हिस्से में उस की पुनरावृत्ति न हो सके। सुप्रीम कोर्ट के किसी जज के मातहत कोई इस तरह की कमेटी, बोर्ड या ट्राइब्यूनल बनाया जाये, जो जांच कर के सारे मुल्क के सामने इन तथ्यों को रखे। प्रश्न सिर्फ यह नहीं है कि चूंकि आसाम के बंगाली भाषी यह चाहते हैं, या हमारे बंगाल के मित्र यह चाहते हैं, इस लिए यह जांच की जाये। इस सारी घटना में मुझे जो अफ़सोस होता है, वह यह देख कर होता है कि हमारे बंगाल के मित्र, और बंगाल की असेम्बली तक इस प्रश्न को सिर्फ़ बंगालियों और आसामियों का प्रश्न बना देना चाहते हैं। मैं निवेदन करना चाहता हूं कि प्रश्न आसामियों और बंगालियों का नहीं है, यह प्रश्न भारतीयों का है और भारतीयता का है।

इस सन्दर्भ में मैंने अखबार में जो कुछ पढ़ा है, उस से मेरा सिर शर्म से झुक जाता है। कहा जाता है कि कल वेस्ट बंगाल असेम्बली में ऐसे प्रस्ताव पर बहस हुई। वह बहस वहां पर हो सकती थी, या नहीं, इस में मैं नहीं जाना चाहता हूं। इस विषय में भावनायें उभरी हुई हैं, इस लिए सम्भवतः वैस्ट बंगाल असेम्बली ने इस प्रश्न पर बहस की। लेकिन उस वक्त जो एक भाषण दिया गया, उस को देख कर मुझे लगता है कि हम सारी भारतीयता को नष्ट कर रहे हैं, अपने देश की एकता को नष्ट कर रहे हैं। मैं टाइम्ज़ आफ़ इंडिया में से क्वोट कर रहा हूं :

> "Nine Opposition Members who supported the resolution were highly critical of the Prime Minister's statement yesterday in Parliament."

अगर श्री जवाहरलाल जी अपने परसों के भाषण में, जो कुछ उन्होंने कल कहा, उस का इंडिकेशन कर देते, तो सम्भवतः वैस्ट बंगाल असेम्बली में यह भाषण न होता। आखिर सब मामलों को बिगाड़ते तो यही लोग हैं। फिर कहा गया है :

> "And the leader of the Communist group, Mr. Jyoti Basu, requested Dr. Roy not to carry on the administration under directions from the Centre if the resolution was rejected."

मुझे यह देख कर शर्म आती है कि हिन्दुस्तान के किसी हिस्से में इस तरह की बात कही जा सकती है कि एक सूबा, एक राज्य भारत की एकता से अलग हो कर कोई नया शासन बनाए कोई आजादी की बात करे। अगर मुझे अंग्रेज़ी का थोड़ा बहुत ज्ञान है, तो मुझे तो इस भाषण से इसी तरह की बदबू आती है। अगर इस में यह भावना न हो, तो मैं इस का स्वागत करूंगा, लेकिन कम से कम यह बदबू आती है। इस तरह की बदबू पैदा करते की क्यों कोशिश होती है ?

इस सन्दर्भ में मैं यह कहना चाहता हूं कि आसाम में पच्चीस तीस साल पहले एक आन्दोलन चला, जिस को भूमि पुत्र आन्दोलन कहा गया, **सन्स आफ दि सायल मूवमेंट** कहा गया। उस आन्दोलन की प्रतिकिया या नकल पश्चिमी बंगाल में हुई। बिहार के कुछ हिस्सों में भी इस तरह का आन्दोलन चला है कि कुछ लोग भूमि-पुत्र हैं और दूसरे नहीं हैं। मैं पूछना चाहता हूं कि जो दूसरे लोग वहां रहते हैं, क्या वे भूमि-पुत्र नहीं हैं? क्या वे भारत के पुत्र नहीं हैं? क्या वे आकाश-पुत्र हैं? कुछ लोगों को **सन्स आफ दि सायल** कहा जाता है, तो क्या दूसरे लोग **सन्स आफ दि स्काई** हैं?

14·08 hrs.

[SHRI JAGANATHA RAO *in the Chair*]

मैं यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूं कि आसाम में जो कुछ हुआ है, वह पच्चीस तीस साल से चलने वाले उस भूमि-पुत्र आन्दोलन की वजह से हुआ है।

मेरे मित्र, श्री गुह, ने किसी कविता का उद्धरण दिया, जिस के बारे में कहा जाता है कि आसाम की सरकार ने उस को स्कूलों में पढ़ाने के लिए, या किसी और बात के लिए मन्जूर किया हुआ है। लेकिन अगर न भी मन्जूर किया हो, तो भी अगर आसाम में इस तरह की कविता का प्रचार होता है, जो **बंगाल खेडा मूवमेंट** को प्रोत्साहन देती है, इस आन्दोलन को प्रोत्साहन देती है कि आसाम से बंगाली, या गैर-आसामी निकल जायें, तो मैं समझता हूं कि यह देश के लिए बहुत दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण बात है। और उसके नतीजे ये निकल रहे हैं कि आसाम में इतनी बड़ी जबरदस्त ट्रेजिडी हुई; हमारे मस्तक पर इतना बड़ा कलंक का टीका लगा कि केवल जानें हीं नहीं गई, बल्कि हमारी माताओं और बहनों की इज्जत ली गई।

श्री त्यागी (देहरादून): जो मुगलों और अंग्रेजों के ज़माने में भी नहीं हुआ।

श्री बजराज सिंह: हिन्दुस्तान के इतिहास में कभी ऐसी बात नहीं हुई, बल्कि अपनी माताओं-बहनों की इज्जत के लिए लोगों ने जानें दे दीं। हमारा इतिहास यह बताता है कि हमारी देवियां, महिलायें, बहनें जौहर करतीं थीं, अपने प्राण न्योछावर कर देती थीं कि कहीं उन की इज्जत न चली जाये। और आज हम अपने हाथों से अपनी माताओं-बहनों की इज्जत ले रहे हैं। आखिर हम कहां जा रहे हैं? भूमि-पुत्र आन्दोलन, **संस आफ दि सायल मुवमेंट** का यह नतीजा है।

मुझे बताया गया है कि गौहाटी रिफाइनरी में ४०० एम्पलाईज़ में से सिर्फ ४० बंगाली हैं? मैं कहता हूं कि ४० क्या, अगर ४०० भी बंगाली हों, तो क्या जुर्म है। आसाम के एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन में २० परसेंट या १० या ४० परसेंट भी बंगाली-भाषी हों, यह कोई दलील की बात है? इस तरह की दलील का कोई सवाल नहीं है। हमारे संविधान ने हमें अधिकार दिया है कि कोई भी व्यक्ति देश में कहीं जा सकता है और रह सकता है और उस को नौकरी भी मिल सकती है। लेकिन हिन्दुस्तान की सरकार कुछ गलतियां कर रही है। वह इस तरह की नीतियां तय करती है कि जो केन्द्रीय सरकार की तरफ से चलने वाले कार्य हैं, उन में इतने लोग लोकल रहेंगे और इतने शेष भारत से लिये जा सकते हैं। मैं कहता चाहता हूं कि इस तरह की बात बंगाल खेडा मूवमेंट या भूमि-पुत्र आन्दोलन को जन्म देती है, और उस से मुल्क की एकता नष्ट होती है। आखिर यह मुल्क कहां जा रहा है? क्या मुल्क में कोई है गांधी जी जैसा, क्या मुल्क में कोई है गणेश शंकर विद्यार्थी जैसा, जो मुल्क की एकता के लिये अपनी जान देने के लिए तैयार हो? मुझे खुशी हुई होती अगर ३८ आदमियों के मरने से देश में एकता हो जाती। वे सब भारतीय थे मैं पूछना चाहता हूं कि चाहे आसामी भाषी हों चाहे बंगाली भाषी हों वे लोग, कोई व्यक्ति क्यों नहीं मर गया उन की जान

[श्री ब्रजराज सिंह]

बचाने के लिये? आज देश का पतन हो रहा है कि हम किसी की जान बचाने के लिये अपनी जान नहीं दे सकते, हम सिर्फ दूसरे की जान ले सकते हैं। मैं निवेदन कर रहा था कि भूमि-पुत्र आन्दोलन के बाद अगर उसे रोका नहीं जाता है तो इस से केवल असम के लोगों की ही नहीं बंगाल की भी हानि होने वाली है। असम में जो कुछ हुआ उस की प्रतिक्रिया पश्चिमी बंगाल में भी हुई। मैं नहीं कहता कि पश्चिमी बंगाल सरकार ने उसे रोकने की कोशिश नहीं की, उसे रोकने की कोशिश उस ने की है, लेकिन जो कुछ हुआ है उस के सारे तथ्य मुल्क के सामने नहीं आये। यह मौका भी ऐसा नहीं है कि वह सामने लायें जायें और तथ्यों को सामने प्रकट कर के यहां पर भावनायें भड़काई जायें। मैं चाहता हूं कि शांति हो और एक दूसरे के लिये प्रेम पैदा हो देश की एकता कायम हो। लेकिन इस भूमि-पुत्र आन्दोलन की प्रतिक्रिया यहां भी हो सकती है। किस के लिये यह भूमि-पुत्र आन्दोलन? आचार्य कृपालानी ने सही बात कहीं, वे आजादी के सिपाही रहे हैं, वे पुरानी बातों को अच्छी तरह से जानते हैं, उन्होंने तजुर्बा किया है, कि थोड़े से लोग हैं पढ़े लिखे जो अपनी नौकरियों के लिये, या लोगों के लिये बिजिनेस मिल जाये, इसके लिये सारे आन्दोलन चलाते हैं। मुझे विश्वास है कि ब्रह्मपुत्र वैली में ९९ फी सदी लोग झगड़ा करने वाले नहीं रहे होंगे। लेकिन मुश्किल यह है कि ९९ फी सदी लोगों को नेतृत्व देने वाला कोई ऐसा आदमी नहीं निकला जो जिन लोगों को राउडी एलिमेंट या गुंडा एलिमेंट कहा जाता है उन को रोकने की कोशिश करता और अगर रोक नहीं सकता था तो अपनी जान दे देता। यह सब से बड़ी दुःख की बात है।

वही बात पश्चिमी बंगाल में आती है। वहां पर उस मारवाड़ी वर्ग के बारे में जिस के लिये मुझ जैसा आदमी हमेशा कहता रहा है, और फिर कहेगा, कि पश्चिमी बंगाल की असेम्बली में इस तरह की बात कही जाने के बजाय अगर श्री ज्योति बसु यह कहते कि पश्चिमी बंगाल में जितनी मारवाड़ी पूंजी है, उस को नेशनलाइज़ कर दो, तो मुझे खुशी होती। लेकिन वे कहने के लिये तैयार नहीं कि मारवाड़ी पूंजी का राष्ट्रीयकरण कर दो, जिस की वजह से दिक्कत पैदा हो रही है। पहले पश्चिमी बंगाल असेम्बली में एक प्रस्ताव पास हुआ था कि जिस में बार-बार लोगों ने कहा कि "हिन्दी साम्राज्यवाद" चलता है। मैं इस में नहीं जाना चाहूंगा कि "हिन्दी साम्राज्यवाद" किसे कहते हैं, लेकिन अगर ७ लाख हिन्दी भाषी मेहतर पश्चिमी बंगाल में काम न करें, तो मैं नहीं जानता क्या हो जायेगा। फिर भी म इस में नहीं जाना चाहता हूं। मैं कहना चाहता हूं कि भूमि-पुत्र आन्दोलन की वजह से असम में जो कुछ हुआ, पश्चिमी बंगाल में उस की प्रतिक्रिया हो सकती है। इस के लिये कोई जिम्मेदार हो या न हो, लेकिन हो सकती है। इस लिये इस डिबेट में मैं जोरदार शब्दों में यह मांग करता हूं कि इस मामले में टाल मटोल की कोशिश न की जाये, "ऐप्रोप्रिऐट टाईम" की बात न की जाये, जो कुछ हुआ है उस की तुरन्त जांच पड़ताल हो और जांच पड़ताल हो कर जो लोग इस के जिम्मेदार हो सकते हैं उन को जो सजा मिल सकती हो वह मिले।

जहां तक राजनीतिक पार्टियों का सवाल है, मुझे तो ताज्जुब होता है, कम्यूनिस्ट कम्यूनिस्ट को मार रहा है, पी० एस० पी० वाला पी० एस० पी० वाले को मार रहा है, कांग्रेस वाला कांग्रेस वाले को मार रहा है। केन्द्रीय सरकार कांग्रेस पार्टी की है। सारे देश में यही राजनीतिक पार्टी है जिस की नीति असम में कुछ है, पश्चिमी बंगाल में कुछ और है, उत्तर प्रदेश में कुछ और है, पंजाब में कुछ और है। इस तरह से राजनीति नहीं चला करती है। मैं कहना चाहता

हूं कि हम सारी राजनीति भूल गये हैं, हमने राष्ट्रीयपन को छोड़ दिया है, हम सम्भवत: बंगाल और आसाम के रह गये हैं, बिहार और उत्तर प्रदेश के रह गये हैं, हम देश के नहीं रहे।

अन्त में मैं निवेदन करना चाहूंगा कि आज के डिबेट से हम देश के लिये एक सबक दें आज मुल्क में कुछ लोग ऐसे पैदा हों जो गणेश शंकर विद्यार्थी जैसे हों जो देश के लिये अपनी जान दे सकते हों, जो महात्मा गांधी जैसे हों, जो हसन शहीद सुहरावर्दी के शासन में भी बंगाल में जा कर शांति स्थापति कर सकते थे। आज सारे मुल्क में उसी पार्टी की सरकारें हैं जो कि केन्द्र में सत्तारूढ़ है, आप की पार्टी की ही सरकार असम में है। जब भी कुछ कहा जाता है तो असमर्थता प्रकट की जाती है कि हम कुछ नहीं कर सकते। क्यों नहीं कर सकते? करना चाहिये। मैं कहना चाहता हूं कि इस मामले की तुरन्त जांच हो और भूमि-पुत्र आन्दोलन पर, जो कहता है कि असम असमियों के लिये, बंगाल बंगालियों के लिये, उड़ीसा उड़ियों के लिये, बिहार बिहारियों के लिये, रोक लगाई जाये जिस से हम प्राविंशलिस्ट बनने के बजाय सारे हिन्दुस्तान के बन सकें। मुझे अफसोस है कि हम एक तरफ से आज प्राविंशलिस्ट बनने की कोशिश करते हैं और दूसरी ओर अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय बन जाते हैं, इंटरनैशनल बन जाते हैं। लेकिन हम हिन्दुस्तानी हैं या नहीं, इस को देखने की कोई कोशिश नहीं करते हैं। मुझे आशा है कि यह सदन, सरकार और मुल्क जो नारकीय दृश्य हो रहे हैं असम में, उससे सबक लेंगे और इस तरह के दृश्य भविष्य में न दोहराये जायेंगे और जो खराबियां हैं भूमि-पुत्र आन्दोलन में और दूसरी तरह की खराबियां जिन से सूबे-सूबे के लिये हो जाते हैं, भविष्य में न होंये, वर्ना मुझे बड़े दु:ख के साथ कहना पड़ता है कि इस देश का भविष्य अच्छा नहीं है। हम सब इस देश के निवासी हैं इस लिये इसे बचाने के लिये जितनी गल्तियां हो रही हैं, उन को तुरन्त रोकें, नहीं तो हम गाधी के शिष्य कहलाने के हकदार नहीं होंगे।

Mr. Chairman: May I inform the House that the time-limit for speeches will be only ten minutes hereafter? I request hon. Members to adhere to that time-limit strictly.

Shri Brajeshwar Prasad (Gaya): The problem of Assam is not the problem of the maintenance of law and order. We are throwing dust into our eyes, if we are under the impression that by instituting any judicial enquiry good relationship will be established between the two linguistic groups. I cannot take the moral responsibility of suggesting that the refugees should go back to Assam.

If India is to survive as an independent sovereign entity, unitary Government will have to be established. The first step in that direction is the integration of Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Assam into one province.

पंडित ब्रजनारायण ब्रजेश : सभापति महोदय, असम और बंगाल के सम्बन्ध में दो दिन से बराबर यहां पर हमारे बन्धु अपने विचार व्यक्त कर रहे हैं और संसदीय दल भी असम का दौरा कर के अपना मेमोरैन्डम सदन के सामने प्रस्तुत कर चुका है। प्रधान मंत्री महोदय और गृह मंत्री महोदय ने भी अपने विचार व्यक्त कर दिये हैं। इस में कोई सन्देह नहीं कि असम प्रदेश से आने वाले हमारे बन्धुओं और बंगाल प्रदेश से आने वाले बन्धुओं को सन्तोष हो जाना चाहिये कि स्थिति पर अधिकार प्राप्त करने की चेष्टा की जा रही है। मैं समझता हूं कि शासन को स्थिति को अपने हाथ में लेने के लिये जो करना चाहिये उस के लिये व सन्नद्ध है, तत्पर है और कटिबद्ध है। यह प्रभाव हमारे मन पर आया है और इस कारण

[पंडित ब्रज नारायण ब्रजेश]

हमें बड़ा सन्तोष हुआ है। असम से लौटते समय मेरे हृदय की स्थिति उतनी ठीक नहीं थी जितनी इन भाषणों को सुनने के पश्चात् हो गई है। परन्तु वहां की वास्तविक स्थिति क्या है इस से सदन अभी पूर्ण रूपेण अवगत नहीं है, ऐसा मैं समझता हूं। मैं उसे देख कर आया हूं। इतना तो निश्चित है कि असमी और बंगाली के बीच में इतनी घोर घृणा का निर्माण हुआ है जिस की कल्पना हमारे बन्धु इस सदन में नहीं कर सकते। इतनी भयानक दुर्घटना हुई जिस ने सारे संसार के सामने हमारा मुख रंजित कर दिया। जो देश संसार को पंचशील का उपदेश देता है और सत्य तथा अहिंसा के आधार पर ही मरने जूझने के लिये खड़ा हुआ है, स्वतंत्र होने के पश्चात् वही देश अपने बन्धु-बान्धवों के साथ इस प्रकार का बर्ताव करेगा, इस की कल्पना संसार में कोई नहीं कर सकता। हमें अपने स्वरूप को पहचानना होगा। कोई भी इस प्रकार की बुराइयां करता हो, किसी भी वर्ग से आता हो, किसी जाति से आता हो, किसी प्रदेश से आता हो, अगर वह इस देश का निवासी है, तो इस प्रकार का अपराध कर के छोड़ा नहीं जा सकता। मैं कितना भी भावावेश में क्यों न होऊं, किसी भी प्रकार का वह भाव क्यों न हो, लेकिन वह भाव जिस भूमि पर उत्पन्न हो रहा है उस भूमि को ध्वस्त नहीं कर सकता। इस प्रकार के भाव को नहीं खड़ा होने दिया जा सकता कि जिस भूमि पर उत्पन्न हो उसी को ध्वस्त करे। इस प्रकार के भाव को समाप्त किया जाना चाहिये। इस देश में प्रत्येक व्यक्ति देश के अन्दर कन्धे से कन्धा भिड़ाकर खड़ा रहेगा अपने महान लोगों के साथ, अपने आदर्श पुरुषों के साथ, अपने शासन के सामने जा कर अपनी आपत्ति रखेगा परन्तु उनके मार्ग में कंटक पैदा नहीं करेगा। जब शत्रु आक्रमण करने के लिये तैयार हो तब अपने ही घर ओ इस तरह की उलझनें उत्पन्न करता है उससे अधिक राष्ट्र का शत्रु और कौन हो सकता है।

प्रधान मंत्री महोदय कहीं खुश्चेव, कहीं आइजनहोवर और कहीं मैकमिलिन के मस्तिष्क को टटोलने में उलझे हुये हैं, और यहां आसामी और बंगाली कहते हैं कि हम दोनों लड़ कर मरेंगे। यह प्रधान मंत्री के लिए सहयोग है? यह सहकार है? यह अपनी सरकार है। अपने शासन के साथ देश इस प्रकार का व्यवहार क्यों करता है? देश ने शासन के साथ कोआपरेट करना चाहिये। सहयोग करना चाहिये। चाहे वह देश का सिटीजन हो या वह शासनारूढ़ हो, चाहे वह शासन की गद्दी पर बैठा हो। यह हर व्यक्ति की रेसपांसिबिलिटी है। और जो गद्दी पर बैठने वाला है उसका उत्तरदायित्व साधारण नागरिक से अधिक है क्योंकि उसको नागरिक से ऊंचा पद प्राप्त हो गया है।

हम देखते हैं कि देश के प्रान्त-प्रान्त में शासन को दुर्बल और निर्बल बनाने के लिये षड़यंत्र चल रहे हैं। मैं किसी भी दल या पार्टी का होऊं इससे कोई सम्बन्ध नहीं है, मैं अनेक बार सदन में यह कह चुका हूं कि जब हम सदन में बोलें तो इस तरह बोलना चाहिये कि हम अपने घर में बोल रहे हैं। यह सदन हमारा घर है। इस सदन में अगर हम यह भाव रख कर बोलें कि दूसरी पार्टियों को दो बातें सुना कर लज्जित कर सकें, तो यह तो स्वयं हमारे लिये ही लज्जा की बात होगी। यह घर तो अपना है। हमने आत्मीयता के साथ अपने विचारों को सदन के सामने रखना चाहिये और सदन को उसी आत्मीयता से उनको सुनना चाहिये। किसी को चिढ़ाने का, कुढ़ाने का, विचार फैलाने का या फिर अखबारों की तरफ देखने का यह स्थान नहीं है।

यह एक बुरी आदत पड़ गई है, सबसे अधिक नेताओं में, कि यदि वह अखबारों में अपना नाम छपा देख लेते हैं तो उनको लगता है जैसे हम तर गये, और अगर उनका फोटो अखबारों में छप जाता है तो ऐसा अनुभव करते हैं मानों उनके पुरखा तर गये। यह जो प्रवृत्ति है कि प्रातःकाल चाय आते ही बराबर देखते हैं कि अखबार में हमारा नाम छपा है या नहीं, यह कौनसी कल्याणकारी प्रवृत्ति है। आया या नहीं, दिया या नहीं, इससे क्या ? इस नेतागिरी के चक्कर में बहुत लोग आए हुये हैं। उनको यहां तक स्वार्थ समाया है, और उनमें यहां तक यशलिप्सा, धनलिप्सा और पदलिप्सा घर कर गयी है कि वह यह नहीं देखते कि हम एक कार्य को करने के लिये क्या पग बढ़ा रहे हैं, हम कौनसा कार्य कर रहे हैं।

आसाम में इस प्रकार की स्थिति को बढ़ने का अवसर मिला यह केन्द्र की ही भूल है। केन्द्र उलझा है अनेक बातों में, केन्द्र को आसाम की ओर जितनी जागरूकता रखनी चाहिये थी वह उस ने नहीं रखी। वहां पर यह स्थिति धीरे-धीरे वृद्धि पाती रही और अन्त में इतने भयावह रूप में प्रकट हुई। उसको पहले ही सावधानी के साथ पकड़ कर ठीक किया जाना चाहिये था। किन्तु केन्द्र दीर्घ काल से उन्माद की अवस्था में पड़ा था। ऐसा लगता है कि जैसे वह अभी नींद से उठा है और आंखें मल रहा है और उसे पता नहीं है कि पूरा प्रातःकाल हुआ हैं या नहीं। इतनी बड़ी-बड़ी घटनायें घट रही हैं और शासन सोता है। आसाम में यह झगड़ा पहली वार नहीं हुआ है, दो बार और हो चुका है।

अब यह भाषा का झगड़ा है। सभापति महोदय, सन् १९४७ में जब श्री गोपीनाथ बारदोलोई ने यह कहा कि "आसाम फार आसामीज" उस समय गांधी जी सावधान हुये थे। उन्होंने कहा कि यह नारा ठीक नहीं है। इसको अभी रोका जाना चाहिये। आसाम, बंगाल, उत्तर प्रदेश, मध्य प्रदेश, सब प्रान्त भारतवर्ष के हैं और भारतवर्ष के लिये हैं। यह भावना नहीं होनी चाहिये कि मध्य प्रदेश मध्य प्रदेश वालों के लिये है। मध्य प्रदेश में प्रत्येक भारतीय का अधिकार है। प्रत्येक आसामी का बंगाल पर उतना ही अधिकार है जितना कि किसी बंगाली का आसाम पर। आसाम और बंगाल दो नहीं हैं। आसाम और बंगाल को दो करने के लिये कोई तृतीय शक्ति काम कर रही है, और वह शक्ति है पाकिस्तान। पाकिस्तान का निर्माण हमने नहीं किया है। घबराना नहीं चाहिये। जब मैं पाकिस्तान का नाम लेता हूं तो हमारे कुछ बन्धु ऐसे रुष्ट और क्षुब्ध हो जाते हैं जैसे वह उनका लाडला बेटा हो। ठीक है, आप पाकिस्तान से बातचीत कीजिये, समझौते कीजिये, उसको समझाइये-बुझाइये, परन्तु वस्तु-स्थिति को तो हमें ठीक प्रकार प्रकट कर लेने दीजिये, हमको अपने हृदय के भाव तो प्रकट करने का अवसर दीजिये। हमारे प्रधान मंत्री पाकिस्तान के साथ इतनी सज्जनता का व्यवहार कर रहे हैं लेकिन पाकिस्तान अपने जाल बिछाये हुये है। पाकिस्तान बराबर वहां खदेड़-खदेड़ कर पाकिस्तानी प्रवृत्ति को भेज रहा है।

Shrimati Mafida Ahmed: On a point of order. He is speaking on the Assam situation and he is making a reference to Pakistan. Why is he doing so?

Mr. Chairman: There is no point of order.

Shrimati Mafida Ahmed: This is not a foreign affairs debate.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member may continue.

An Hon. Member: Does she hold a brief for Pakistan?

पंडित ब्रज नारायण ब्रजेश : सभापति महोदय, मैं यह निवेदन कर रहा था कि पाकिस्तान हमारा पड़ोसी देश है। उसके

[पंडित ब्रज नारायण ब्रजेश]

साथ जैसी ममता हमारी सम्माननीया बहिन सदस्या को है, वैसा ही सम्मान मेरे मन में भी पाकिस्तान के लिये है । मैं कोई दुर्भावना से नहीं बोल रहा हूं । मैं तो उस दुर्भाव का वर्णन कर रहा हूं जो कि पाकिस्तान के लिये भी घातक है । सम्भव है कि भय के मारे पाकिस्तान के लोग उसको कह न सकते हों क्योंकि वहां पर अय्यूब खां का शासन है और सैन्य राज्य है, वहां डिमाक्रेसी और प्रजातंत्र खत्म हो गया है । और इस प्रकार की प्रवृत्ति को जल्दी दूर करने का प्रयत्न किया जाना चाहिये । आज देश में इस प्रकार की गुंडागर्दी चल रही है कि घर वाले ही अपने घरों को जला रहे हैं ।

अपने घर में आग लगा कर,
फाग खेलते हैं मतवाले,
और कौन कर सकता है,
दुनिया में ऐसे करतब काले।

आज लोग अपने घर में आग लगा कर फाग खेल रहे हैं । यह प्रवृत्ति वहां से आयी है । संख्या वहां बढ़ गई है और उसके बाद बंगाली और आसामी की भावना को जन्म दिया गया ।

मुझ से रुष्ट नहीं होना चाहिये बंगाली बन्धुओं को । इसमें सन्देह नहीं कि बंगाली बुद्धिमान हैं, योग्य हैं । हिन्दुस्तान में उसने लड़ाई लड़ी । लेकिन मैं निवेदन करूंगा कि उनको दूसरों को छोटे की भावना से नहीं देखना चाहिये । कहीं-कहीं यह भाव प्रकट किया जाता है । यह प्रान्तीयता है । यह प्रान्तीयता नहीं होनी चाहिये । यह भाव नहीं होना चाहिये कि हम अलग हैं, बंगाली अलग हैं और आसामी अलग हैं । बंगाली और आसामी दोनों एक हैं यह भाव होना चाहिये, और इस समय आसामी के मन में त्याग की भावना की आवश्यकता है । उसको सबसे पहले त्याग करना पड़ेगा । इस भावना को पैदा करने में शासन को भी प्रयत्न करना पड़ेगा । केवल उपदेश से रिहैबिलिटेशन नहीं होगा । इतनी जोर की घृणा निर्माण हुई है कि उसको बड़ी सावधानी के साथ पकड़ना होगा । बातों से काम चलने वाला नहीं है, अन्यथा स्थिति और भी भयावह हो सकती है, क्योंकि इसका रिएक्शन बंगाल पर होने वाला है, बंगाल का रिएक्शन बिहार पर होने वाला है और फिर यह रिएक्शन आगे बढ़ता जाएगा । यह सिविल वार का षड़यंत्र राष्ट्र के शत्रु भीतर ही भीतर कर रहे हैं । इससे अत्यन्त सावधान होने की आवश्यकता है ।

मैं निवेदन करूंगा कि बंगालियों को एक अच्छे नेताओं का दल बना कर आसाम भेजना चाहिये जो कि जा कर लोगों को समझाये और आसामियों को चाहिये कि वह बंगालियों को बुला-बुला कर अपने यहां रखें । इसमें केन्द्रीय सरकार को भी सहयोग करना चाहिये । इस काम में जनता और शासन दोनों को ही प्रयत्न करना होगा तब वहां शुद्ध वायुमंडल पैदा होगा और तब हम उस पाकिस्तानी प्रवृत्ति को जो आसाम को पाकिस्तान की तरफ ले जाने के लिये जाल बिछाये है, चैक कर सकगे क्योंकि वह प्रवृत्ति वहां व्याप्त हो गई है । इस दृष्टि से मैं चाहूंगा कि जिन्होंने अपराध किये हैं उनको दंडित किया जाना चाहिये चाहे वे कितने ही बड़े-बड़े पदों पर क्यों न हों । मैं तो कहता हूं कि चाहे वह शासन के पद पर क्यों न हों, अगर उनसे भूल हुई है तो उनको तत्काल दंडित किया जाना चाहिये । ऐसी व्यवस्था होनी चाहिये कि देश में प्रत्येक प्रान्त में लोगों को यह विश्वास हो जाए कि हमारी केन्द्रीय सरकार सन्नद्ध है और कटिबद्ध है कि देश के किसी भी भाग में अराजकता को, अनाचार को, दुराचार को और अत्याचार को प्रश्रय नहीं मिलेगा । शासन तत्काल उसका दमन करेगा, ऐसा

विश्वास सब लोगों को होना चाहिये। यह देश का प्रश्न है।

Mr. Chairman: Dr. Krishnaswami. Only 10 minutes.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I want only 8 minutes.

Dr. Krishnaswami (Chingleput): Sir, what has occurred is a grave misfortune not only for Assam and West Bengal but for the whole of India. What is most hurting to many of us is that we have in a State certain people going away to another State to seek asylum as refugees. This is a major problem which we have to solve. But to solve it we have to understand the reasons for such an occurence. But before censuring one side or the other, or apportioning blame between different parties or groups or administrations we must make this an occasion for introspection and for a careful reassessment of our policies to weld an old people into a new nation.

The principal reason for the type of eruption we have had in Assam is to be found in the fact that in a basically conservative society—and make no mistake about it, Indian society is a conservative society—the presence of an outsider is generally a source of some irritation, and the resentment against the outsider takes on a sharper edge when, rightly or wrongly, he is considered to be standing in the way of the prospects of the local population. Perhaps it is from that point of view that in many cases, in many States, we have had instances of making things more difficult for the outsider than for the local inhabitants, by various built-in restrictions regarding domicile and language. Of course, such restrictions are not likely to promote the cause of unity or freedom. But if we want unity we are not going to achieve it by asking people to forget their distinctive culture and social backgrounds. There is no advantage in pursuing a line, as we seem to be doing now, that the different linguistic and cultural groups in our Union and States should be integrated into a fabricated Indian society. This cannot happen, and this will not happen, since we have a background of two thousand years of history and tradition. No doubt the previous contacts we had between different cultures were either limited or were the result of the wars and invasions. Now, it has also to be recognised that the structure of Indian society has always tended to keep the separateness of groups, either through caste, religion or language. It is right that we should try to remove such separateness. But we cannot remove this separateness if we choose to ignore the presence of this factor of separateness. If this is recognised, our approach will have to concentrate not on making people give up their identities, but on creating an environment in which they feel different but equal. This can be achieved by pursuing two policies concurrently. We ought to strengthen the weaker sections within the community and we ought also to more actively promote the interests of backward States and simultaneously reduce the existing barriers to the free movement of goods and men. Certainly during the past thirteen years, and certainly today, we have had more instances of restrictions on inter-State movement of goods and persons than we ever had under alien rule. In many instances these restrictions are the results of defences raised by groups which feel uncertain about their own economic prospects in the face of outsiders.

Therefore, a positive duty lies on us, not only to promote actively the interests of the weaker sections of our population and also the backward areas, but also to creat an environment in which the outsiders are able to live in harmony. The question is how we are going to do it. It will have to be done on three or four levels. And I can say that, looking at the question impartially, we have to consider also that migrants as well as the local inhabitants have to be brought together and have to play an active part.

[Dr. Krishnaswami]

Also, let us realise that with the progress of economic development it would be possible to break down many of these barriers. The Ajit Prasad Jain Committee has given a valuable disquisition on the language problem. I am one of those who feel that this language issue has been overworked. It is not that linguistic States are a danger or that they would create fissiparous tendencies by their very creation. But an excessive preoccupation with the regional language and disregard for the unifying forces would create fresh and dangerous problems. We have had instances, in this very debate on Bengal and Assam, where people have bandied census figures and attempted to show that one group has increased in population and another group has diminished in population, mainly with a view to finding out whether a particular language can be imposed or not, notwithstanding the constitutional guarantees that we have given to the various minorities. And I wish to point out, notwithstanding what several of my friends have said already on this question, that this excessive preoccupation with a regional language is certainly going to have much greater dangers for all of us if we are not careful in our conduct?

Let us realise today that, English more than any other single factor is a unifying force in our academic and official lives. It would be many, many years, before the non-Hindi speaking peoples voluntarily opt for a different regional language. In the meanwhile, in the interests of unity, we should do nothing to weaken some of the unifying forces that are at work.

I would only want to suggest that on this question of having one regional language as an official language in a State we should so frame our rules and regulations that we do not give the impression to other minorities that their language is inferior in Status. What is happening today in our public life is that in many cases our excessive love for one particular language makes us take up the position that the other language should not be given any position or status whatsoever. Such a thing thrives in an atmosphere where there is too much of preoccupation for a regional language.

My hon. friend the Home Minister pointed out that what had happened in Assam was mainly an administrative failure. Certainly a thorough enquiry into administrative failures, as distinct from political failures, is called for. But let it not be an enquiry only into the administrative failures of one particular State. Let this be an occasion for a searching enquiry into how our district administrations have been faring. I have been feeling that for some years we have denuded the districts of their best talents with the result that there have been few people of the requisite efficiency and status in the districts. There are District Collectors who are afraid to say "boo" to a goose and, naturally, when a serious situation like a riot breaks out, they are unable to control it. Although in Assam we have witnessed the collapse of an administration. I want to point out that there are several other areas where there are stresses and strains. It was a great pity that I did not have an opportunity to participate in the debate on the Central Government employees strike, where I possibly might have had a chance of throwing some light on the administrative fabric and emphasising the need for a through overhauling of the administrative system. It is no use trying to gloss over the problems or to think that two particular States, Assam and Bengal, are to blame. The blame is practically to be shared by all of us in India.

My hon. friend the Law Minister pointed out that the primary task which faced the Parliament was to recommend measures for rehabilitating refugees. Parliament would, I feel sure, certainly give liberal assistance and would even vote financial assistance for the rehabilitation of those refugees, provided two conditions are fulfilled: the refugees must be rehabilitated in Assam, and the conditions must be created for their living in amity with those in Assam.

I would also suggest that in this matter of rehabilitation of refugees what is necessary and what is more than ever essential is that we should look at this problem not only from the point of view of only rehabilitating refugees but also of considering how we are going to reconcile the welfare of migrants with those who are local inhabitants. I do not for a moment suggest that the problem does not present difficulties. In a period of dynamic change when the economy is fast moving, there will be a greater inflow of populations from one State to another State seeking jobs and opportunities for employment. Along with the measures for protecting those who are the weaker sections of our society, we should also take positive steps to remove the various restrictions that are very much in force on the movements of goods and persons.

It is not enough to merely preach or suggest that we should be moved by national sentiment. What is necessary is to reinforce that statement by positive action and on this matter I venture to suggest that we have not devoted enough attention to what has been happening in different parts of the country. This enquiry into the administrative failures would be productive of good provided we are willing to undertake a very careful analyses into these various restrictions that are being imposed. Let us also realise that the protective measures that we are thinking of must be such as to promote a sense of feeling and amity among the different groups.

We are not the only country which has faced this problem. I do not on that account excuse the lapses that have occurred. I do wish to point out that in other countries there have been similar problems which arose from the impact of fresh cultures upon old. In the United States from 1880 right up to 1911 or thereabout, there was unrestricted migration of people from different parts of the world—from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Russia and different countries of Europe. In the first few years, the problems that were created by the impact of the new population on the old were serious and considerable. Indeed the greatest test of statesmanship is to attempt to reconcile the claims of the old population with the new to find out how best we can harmonise these things and to create administrative structures where passions will not be allowed to destroy the very foundation of order and security. Law and order might be exhalted by Richelieu and the Home Minister. There is this thing which has to be understood that without law and order all liberty will degenerate into licence and it is essential that at the district level both from the point of view of development and from the point of view of maintenance of peace and tranquility a very searching enquiry should be conducted and the Home Minister as the custodian of the Indian Administrative Service would not be discharging his functions properly if he did not make such a searching enquiry not only into the Assam administrative structure but into the administrative structure in India as a whole.

Mr. Chairman: Shrimati Renu Chakravartty.

Shri Radhelal Vyas: Is it that only Members from the Opposition will be called one after the other?

Shri Ansar Harvani: What about our Benches?

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Mr. Chairman, it is quite obvious that everybody is very deeply interested in taking part in the debate and I think this debate has belied the earlier conviction of many hon. Members that it would raise bitterness and complecate matters.

श्री नवल प्रभाकर (बाह्य दिल्ली-रक्षित अनुसूचित जातियां) : सभापति महोदय, मैं एक सुझाव देना चाहता हूं कि बंगाली और आसामी तो बहुत बोल चुके हैं, अब हम लोगों कों भी मौका दिया जाये ।

Mr. Chairman: I may assure the House that the hon. Speaker has prepared a list of names and hon. Members from all sides will be called. They will have to wait and take their chance.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: I think the hon. Members should not be annoyed that Members from Bengal had participated or that Members from Assam had participated because these are things which are not going to rest as between Assam and Bengal. We do have big minorities, very big minorities in all States, and it is from that point of view that we want you to help us and that is the spirit in which we should take this debate. Yesterday, the level of the debate was very high and we all talked of national unity of India and stressed it is time that this Parliament should take practical steps to strengthen that unity. Many hon. Members have said here that we have paid lip service, so to say, to national unity but when it comes to our own States, each one of us becomes a chauvinist in many ways. I was disappointed with the speech of the Home Minister and I must frankly say so. I did not like his labouring the point as to why he introduced President's rule in Kerala and why he did not introduce it in Assam. We were not asking for President's rule in Assam. We know why President's rule had been introduced in Kerala because it was a non-Congress Government. These things need not have been brought up here. But everybody in the House has felt perturbed as to why the Central Government did not move swiftly. It was not only a question of President's rule. We have not had a satisfactory answer why was it that the army did not move swiftly? The hon. Prime Minister says that it did move swiftly. Yet, two hon. Members of our Party, Shri Vasudevan Nair and Dr. Raj Bahadur Gour went there in the last week of July, 22nd of July and they returned and informed us that even then in Goreshwar and Roha there were no military posts even on that day. They might have gone and come away after visiting that place. But we have had no answer to that question.

Again, what was the Central intelligence doing? The hon. Home Minister has not enlightened us on that. We do not know how the Governor of the province informs the Central Government in the third week of June that matters are improving after the I.G.'s circular on June 1st. This circular was the one single fact that was not known to us. I knew everything else more or less whatever came in the report, because I have read these things in the Press. In the first week of June, the I.G. of Assam had issued a circular saying that matters were going to be very serious. After that, did things get better? I am sorry to disagree with the Home Minister that only "petty incidents" took place. In answer to questions in this House itself, we have been told that the railway and air services were disrupted, the RMS staff could not work properly. Right up to the third week, there were incident which took place in many parts. Yet, we are told that the Governor told the Central Government that matters were getting better. I do not know about the "prophetic news" which the hon. Home Minister gave to Shri A. K. Sen. I did not get an inkling at all in the speech of the Home Minister. We all feel rather perturbed. Why did they not move swiftly in the matter? That is the first question.

Before I take up my second point, I want to say this. I have seen many of my Assam friends and they feel that our demand for a judicial enquiry is a sort of an inquisition against Assam. I want to say very seriously that it is not an inquisition against the Assamese people. I have not been there but I have heard that every party is implicated in it. The biggest party, as proudly proclaimed by Shri P. C. Borooah, the Congress Party has to take the biggest responsibility for it. There is no getting away from that. Yet in Assam there were fine examples, shining examples of people who stood up for the minority community. I know of one in my own party—one Dodhi Mahanto about whom it has been written even in *Jugantar*—that he was like Shiva standing in the midst of a burning *smasan*. These instances are there. Nobody wants any inquisition against the people of Assam.

The Prime Minister has made an eloquent appeal that we must stand by Shri Chaliha because he is the only person who can really bring a liberal approach to the whole problem. If he wants to help Shri Chaliha, the best thing that he can do is to order an enquiry. It is no use blaming the students. I was a professor and I know. We often blame the students because they could pass the examinations. But how many of us really think about how we have taught them. It is no use my friend Shri Basumatari saying: what about the teachers? Who taught the teachers? It is the political leaders who taught the teachers. That is why in this enquiry which we have asked for, we have asked for an enquiry not only into the events that have taken place now but also why this long corroding influence of Bengal Kheda movement has been carried on in Assam. I am not exempting my province; we should look at the other provinces also. I know that in the north of Bengal the Nepalese feel strongly about their rights being protected. Every minority coming from other States feels in the same way. We know that the minorities do not feel secure. So many Bengalis have come from Bihar and Orissa. They say that they may not be able to live there very long. People who have from South India also say that they may not be able to live for long in Calcutta. This sort of feeling is there.

Sir, Shri Bordoloi is long dead and gone and, therefore, I should not raise his name, but there is one significant statement made by Shri P. C. Borooah to which I would like to refer. He said that the word "Assamese" connotes those who speak Assamese language. If that is so, "Assam for Assamese" means "Assam only for those who speak Assamese". It means that only those who speak Assamese language can enjoy all the rights of living, moving and having jobs in Assam. Sir, this is the thing that worries me.

Secondly, we have seen that even much more dangerous is the statement which was made in the Assembly in 1947 by Sir Akbar Hydari. On the floor of the Assembly he said:

> "The natives of Assam are now masters of their own house. They have a Government which is both responsible and responsive to them. They can take what steps are necessary for the encouragement and propagation of Assamese language and culture and of the languages and customs of tribal peoples who are their fellow citizens and who also must have a share in the formation of such policies. The Bengalee has no longer the power, even if he had the will, to impose anything on the peoples of the hills and villages which constitute Assam. The basis of such feelings against him as exist is fear—but now there is no cause for fear."

Sir, this is a statement made obviously on behalf of the Government by the Governor of that State.

Then, there is this question of indigenous and non-indigenous. This question has been challenged by some of my hon. friends. I looked up and I have got a circular. There was a circular in 1948 which says:

> ". . . . settlement of land should in no circumstances be made with persons who are not indigeonus to the Province."

[Shrimati Renu Chakravartty]

If he likes, Sir, I can give the number etc. of this circular. This kind of circulars were issued.

Therefore, we want that these very deep-seated causes should be enquired into, because, are these orders of the Government and policies of the Government in conformity with the Constitution? That is the point that we have to find out. It is good that these things have come to the forefront through Assam events. We hope that every State will take note of them, and we hope that we shall be able to slowly root out this type of chauvinism and difficulties that are arising in our country.

Now, Sir, I will come to the point of judicial enquiry, why we want a judicial enquiry into these terrible happenings. I have tried to explain that. But we are opposed to the amendment suggested by my hon. friend, Shri Atulya Ghosh because it says in a general way: "at an appropriate time". At least the Prime Minister went a little further and said that there should be quick enquiries, quick regional enquiries. We do not know what kind of enquiries they will be. We want to know how soon they will be constituted? If high court judges of States other than Assam or Bengal will constitute them? What will be the terms of reference of those bodies? Will they be able to go into the behaviour of the administration? We want them to function within the next ten days. Only Goreswar has been mentioned. What about Nowgong? What about Lakhimpur? There are many places like that where this matter should be gone into. We do not mind that, but we are opposed to this sort of a blanket amendment saying that at an appropriate time it may be set up. What is meant by this "appropriate time"? Secondly, for the deeper probe, after the explanation given by Shri Sen, I am more inclined to oppose this sort of a blanket amendment as suggested by Shri Atulya Ghosh. He said it may take eight months, nine months or even ten months. If that is so, then no evidence will be there. That is my feeling and that is why we want that there should be a quick enquiry. There is nothing to be afraid of. We know that there are good people everywhere, more so in Assam, and that we shall get help from those who are saner elements.

Lastly, Sir, I should like to refer to the point which has, been raised by Shri Braj Raj Singh. He mentioned about some speeches made in the West Bengal Legislature. Sir, it is a very serious situation. Some friends have asked us why Bengal is so interested in Assam. We are interested not only because there is a Bengali minority in Assam, not only because there are so many refugees in West Bengal—of course, it is a big problem,—but we are also interested because we have very big minorities in Bengal itself to protect. Personally, Sir, I know—many of us know—what trouble we had on the 16th of July to protect those minorities. Night and day on the 15th and 16th of July, house to house, mohalla to mohalla, we had to go trying to instil some confidence, and we stood as protection at every corner of the road where we expected trouble. That is why we are interested and we want you to help us. That is why this question has been raised in this way: "Dr. Roy, do not take the responsibility if you do not get the help of the Centre". In order to get help from the Centre, Sir, we must have an enquiry. This is the cry that Bengal has raised. This is not a chauvinistic cry or something by which we want to put some people in the dock. We are their friends, we are their brothers and sisters, we are a part of India, and that is why we are interested in solving this question.

Dr. Sushila Nayar (Jhansi): Mr. Chairman, Sir, at the very start I wish to pay a compliment to the Government of Bengal and to my friends the workers from every party in Bengal who did a splendid job in preventing any outbursts and reprisals in Calcutta as a result of the refugees who had come from Assam and the tales that they had carried. Sir, I was one of those people who had the unfortunate experience of seeing how the tales carried by refugees at the time of partition led a trail of holocaust from one place to the other, and I think we may well be proud of the fact that we have sufficient sanity left in this country that there was no aftermath of what happened in Assam—and what happened in Assam was really very very bad.

Sir, when I went there I was reminded of the scenes I had seen in Noakhali. The only difference was that there was not any forced conversion, there was not any element of communalism. I am glad of that, because this one instance of riots in Assam brought out one thing very nicely. An hon. friend from the Opposition Benches a moment ago tried to bring in an element of communalism, tried to bring in the fact that it was some people from Pakistan who were at the back of Assam happenings. But, Sir, what I wish to bring out is the fact that not only nobody from Pakistan was responsible, so far as I know, but even in Assam it was the Muslims, by and large, leaving one or two exceptional instances, who indulged in the riots. They actually helped the Hindu Bengali refugees.

Pandit Brij Narayan "Brijesh": Sir, may I just....

Dr. Sushila Nayar: Sir, I am not yielding the floor. I have very little time and, therefore, I would request hon. Members not to interrupt me.

Sir, in Assam the Muslims did a splendid job. I am a witness to the fact that in a place near Nowgong the Muslims in the villages round about sheltered and fed about 2,200 Hindus—Bengali-speaking Assamese—for nearly eight days. In another place, Sir, a single individual sheltered and fed 400 Bengali-speaking Assamese Hindu men, women and children in the same manner. He was a Muslim gentleman called *Danishmand*. He was really *danishmand*, I should say.

Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri (Berhampore): He also brought out his gun to drive away the rioteers.

Dr. Sushila Nayar: Well, Sir, there are some bright instances of that type where the Muslims have come out and have protected the Hindus, so that it is a cheerful sign, a sign that we are getting over this awful repercussions of the partition times where communalism was rife everywhere.

But, Sir, in the place of communalism a worse poison has raised its head, and that poison is the poison of provincialism. By and large, these bright instances of Muslims sheltering the Hindus were Muslims of Bengal origin who sheltered the Bengali-speaking Hindus in Assam. There were a few instances where Assamese also came forward and protected the Bengali-speaking Assamese. But, Sir, I did not come across any broken bones where anybody had offered resistance to the rioteers and got beaten out. Those were the types of instances which we had seen at the time of partition riots, but they were not here. Why is it happening? It is happening because of the linguistic provinces leading to linguistic loyalties in preference to national loyalty. To have a job, you must belong to a particular linguistic group; to have certain positions, you must belong to a particular linguistic group. As such, it is the vested interests or rather the economic factors that have come into play in the name of linguistic loyalties.

15 hrs.

Along with the economic factors, there are very important and deep-rooted social factors. I have been deeply pained by and large in this debate, barring very few honourable exceptions—the debate of course has cut across party lines—that it became a question as between Assam and Bengal. It is not a matter of Assam and Bengal. It is a matter for the whole of India. It is a matter for the survival of our nationalism. Are we Indians or are we Bengalis, Punjabis, Maharashtrians and what not? I wish

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to say, whether I am born in Punjab or in any other State, I am an Indian. The hon. friend who spoke as a representative from the tribal areas yesterday said, "If he is not a tribal, he cannot be an Indian." I do not understand this kind of reasoning. I am an Indian first, and not a branch or a linguistic or a provincial group first. I am first an Indian and then I am something else. It is this aspect that has got to be brought into focus.

I am a very small fry, but I would like to say in all humility that the Prime Minister is big enough to reconsider whether we have made a mistake in creating these linguistic States, these linguistic provinces, which have created all these complications for us.

The question of students has been raised. Students have been blamed as if they were the prime cause of the whole trouble in Assam. I have been everywhere in Assam and I know that students have played a very prominent part in these incidents. But who led the students? On the 12th August, there was an article in a leading weekly "Assam Bani" written by a professor in the Jorhat College—a very prominent college. The professor belonged to the honourable party of my hon. friend, Shrimati Renu Chakravartty. I cannot go into the article, for I have no time now, but I shall just mention the heading. In Hindi, it comes very aptly:

पत्थर में प्राण आ गए, पत्थर जाग उठा । He has encouraged all that has happened in Assam. He says that "the Assamese people were like stones; they had died, and they had come back to life." That professor was sorry that the disturbances were dying down. These are the kinds of professors who teach our students, and indeed an hon. Member of this House had a role—well, I need not say any thing about it now.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: We are prepared to have an enquiry. You should also be prepared to have an enquiry.

Dr. Sushila Nayar: I am not yielding the floor. I have very little time. I am not blaming anybody. I am only trying to say that the students had leaders and those leaders led the students astray. Therefore, let us not put the blame on the students. Let us certainly search our own hearts. The dissident group of Congressmen is also involved here. Every party exploited the students. What lead did they give to the students? They should search their own hearts.

An Hon. Member: Including yours!

Dr. Sushila Nayar: I mentioned a moment ago about the students. A students' deputation met us. They were very senior students. They said: "What are we to do? Whenever and wherever we go, whether it is the railway or the posts and telegraphs department or other Central Government services, we see all Bengalis. They may be Bengalis of Assamese origin, but we see Bengalis and see them speaking Bengali. We get the impression that all these All-India jobs are really monopolised by the Bengalis and we get nothing." They say that they may be completely wrong. They said so. Maybe, taking the all-India picture, the Bengalis are a little ahead of the Assamese. They were prepared to grant it but said, "let there be a better distribution".

Now, why should the Bengalis be different? There are Assamese of Bengali origin. A very significant factor that needs our attention is this. The Assamese have not struck against the Muslims of Bengali origin. Why is it? Why should the Assamese strike only against the Hindus of Bengali origin? I am not more interested in Assam or Bengal. They are both my blood-brothers and I feel perfectly at home in Bengal and Assam. I am born in Punjab, but I admit that I feel absolutely equally at home in any of these States. I have learnt six or seven languages of the different States, not because I was forced to but because I wanted to. I wanted to be able to speak to the common people in the villages. I do not understand why the hon. Member from the tribal areas should have said what he said yesterday objecting to learning three or four languages. We all had to learn three or four languages in the Punjab: everyone of us learnt Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi and English. Everyone of us learns four languages there without any difficulty. Later, we learnt Bengali, Marathi or Gujarati—whatever language we wanted to learn.

The point is this. The Muslims that have gone to Assam have identified themselves and associated with the people of Assam—the indigenous population of Assam, or whatever you like to call it—(*Interruptions*) If they have to go for *Namaz*, they go to *Namaz* together. If they have to go to the mosque, they all go to the same mosque; whereas in the case of the Hindus, they will have the Bengali Kali Pooja and the Assamese Kali Pooja. They have the Bengali Kali Bari and the Assamese Kali Bari. It is the same with theatres and all the rest of it. I wish that we saw to it that whichever State we live in, we try to become one with the people of that State.

Supposing the Prime Minister of India were to encourage the people of Indian origin in the different countries of the world—Africa or Ceylon or Burma or wherever they are—to remain as a separate group and demand their rights as a separate group, and not have anything to do with the country concerned, how will the others living in those countries feel? The analogy is not complete, because that is a question of people of Indian origin residing in different countries and this is a question of Indians living in the different States of the same country. What I am pointing out is this that on the one hand, it is necessary for us, when we go to live in a particular State, to feel one with the people of that State, and on the other hand, it is necessary for the people living in that State to accept anybody else coming from any other State as an Indian with equal rights and not create any difficulties.

As my time is up, I am almost finishing. The Prime Minister said that there would be an enquiry for punishing the guilty people. Shrimati Renu Chakravartty said that if it is a question of six months or eight months, the evidence will go. Evidence is required only for the riots, for the troubles that were created. That enquiry is not being delayed. That enquiry is being held now. Therefore, the question of evidence disappearing does not arise.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: What was the role of the administration?

Dr. Sushila Nayar: A deeper enquiry, an enquiry into the deeper causes is an enquiry which, as Shri Atulya Ghosh said, may be taken up at an appropriate time. The Prime Minister also said it may be taken up at a later time. That enquiry will have to go into the causes, social, economic and the rest. Maybe that enquiry may force us to revise our policy on the linguistic States. When we thought in terms of linguistic States, we were also thinking of developing a language for India. Some one said to me in Europe "You were trying to have a language for India, a *lingua franca* for India, and develop provincial languages also. You have gone ahead with the linguistic States and the different State languages. But development of the All-India *lingua franca* has lagged behind. This is imbalance. This is what has caused the trouble to a great extent." There is much truth in this statement. We may have to think about doing something with regard to it. I hope that the enquiry into the deeper causes will lead us to find out the remedies and to revise our policy on the issue of linguistic States, if necessary.

15.10 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

The supreme need of today is the creation of a sense of security for the return of the refugees in the interests of

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Assam and Bengal. As the Prime Minister said, there should be an enquiry to bring to book the guilty people without any delay.

Secondly, the rehabilitation facilities have got to improve. I feel that the mere presence of a Central Minister in Assam will not do the job that everybody has in mind. To create that sense of security, to help in the job of psychological rehabilitation, to help the Assamese to express their repentance in action rather than in words, to help the Bengalis or the Bengali-speaking Assamese to settle down without fear and anxiety, I feel groups of workers are necessary, who will stay with them for a few months, just as Bapu took us to Noakhali, and posted us to each village individually, to guarantee the safety of the people, with our lives, if it became necessary. That is the type of approach that is necessary and I hope the Prime Minister and you, Mr. Speaker, will think in those terms and take appropriate action.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have discussed during these three days a subject, which has naturally aroused tremendous feeling, more especially, of course, in Bengal and Assam, but to a certain extent all over India. It would not be surprising, therefore, that strong feeling and passion sometimes found expression here and even glimpses were seen by us of what lay inside the people's minds and hearts. Nevertheless, considering this very difficult and complex problem, we have dealt with it, if I may say so, with all respect, with a very large measure of restraint.

Indeed, if we once get out of the rather, if I may say so, superficial aspects of the problem and look deeper into it, the very magnitude and complexity of the problem is, if I may use the word, rather terrifying. It is a highly important subject today for Assam and Bengal, but as has been stated repeatedly by Members here, the problem is a much bigger, wider, deeper problem. It is not merely a question of Bengalis or Assamese; each one of us is affected and affected in many ways.

Some people here might perhaps—though I hope not—imagine that the others are rather superior and these people, the Assamese, have not behaved well and the Bengalis may be in some ways got excited, but we are a cool-headed people, not being so affected, and we can take an objective view. Well, we are cool-headed because our heads have not been hit. Probably if they had been hit, we would have been not at all cool-headed. It is easy to be cool-headed in those circumstances. But I have felt sitting here, trying to listen, that my mind slightly wandered away. I almost felt as if I was in a haunted place; not only this Chamber, but this great country itself became a haunted place for me and for all of us, with all kinds of ghosts and spectres, pursuing us—ghosts of the past, ghosts of the distant past, ghosts of the recent past, of our feelings, of our conflicts and all that, because what we are discussing here, whatever we may say about Assam or Bengal, is really about ourselves—how we behave, how we feel, how we are excited against each other, how our superficial covering of what you like to call 'nationalism' bursts open at the slightest irritation.

We forget it; whatever we may be—Punjabis, Bengalis, Madrasis or Assamese—immediately it comes out, just as in other ways. We talk so much about communalism, meaning thereby religious, political conflicts—how other things are suddenly swept away, when communal passions are roused. It is not the Assamese who are guilty here or the Bengalis; each one of us is a guilty party. Let us realise that.

When we talk so loudly of our nationalism, each person's idea of nationalism is his own brand of nationalism, it may be Assamese nationalism, it may be Bengali, it may be Gujarati, U.P., Punjabi or Madrasi. Each one thinks of his particular brand in his mind. He may use the words 'nationalism of all India', but in his mind, he is thinking of that nationalism in terms of his own particular brand of it. When two brands of nationalism come to conflict, there is trouble, each talking of nationalism.

So also while talking about Indian unity. We want unity of our own thinking, of our own brand. It is just like each person's orthodoxy in his own 'doxy'; other 'doxies' are heterodoxies. My nationalism is the real brand; yours, if it is different, is not the real nationalism. We all tend to think that way more or less.

We talk about enquiries and causes. We may go deep down into those enquiries and perhaps discover many things which we have forgotten, because as, I think Dr. Krishnaswami said,—he talked something about our social structure, about our close society we live in, not one close society, but numerous close societies all over. Of course, that is due to caste and other things. I am not going into it, but the fact is we live in close societies and groups, not only a Bengali close society or a Marathi or a Malayalee close society, whatever it may be. You will find that when you go abroad, wherever Indians are living in large numbers—not a few, of course—you will find a seperate Gujarati club, a separate Malayalee club, a separate Bengali club and so on and so forth. They do not even have a single Indian club. Where they are in large numbers, you even have in some places a separate Gorakhpuri club. I remember this particularly, because the Gorakhpuri club of Rangoon once gave me a purse of Rs. 10,000. It is ingrained in our background, in our upbringing, in our social structure. Of course, they are social structures that are changing and breaking up. That is a good thing. But let us realise how the conditions we live in are completely different. We talk about nationalism bravely, but always at the back of our mind is that particular narrow type of nationalism which we think is nationalism, not the others.

We talk very proudly and loudly about tolerance and there is the whole of Indian culture. It is a culture of tolerance undoubtedly. But as compared to, let us say, Europe, in European history, as it shows itself, it is a tolerance of peole, tolerance of conscience that we always had. But where it strikes the social habits, we are intolerant, we have been intolerant. A person may believe in God or believe in the negation of God, you put up with him. In other countries he might have been dealt with very harshly. Here, no, you can believe anything you like, but you must abide by the social rules that have been laid down by our caste. If you don't, you get into trouble. You are not only pushed out and exterminated but you are pursued in a hundred ways. This does not happen so much, I suppose, in cities like Delhi and Calcutta, where things are different. But even now in the villages it is a mighty power, and even in the cities for the matter of that, whether it is our marriage or some other ceremony, everything goes not by caste but by sub-caste, an amazing division. It is one thing which is unique in India, at least so far as my knowledge goes. You read in some of our newspapers here column after column of matrimonial advertisements. It is an astonishing thing. Whenever a foreigner comes he is surprised for he has never seen a thing like that—somebody, an Aggarwal, this and that of some sub-caste wanting a bride or bridegroom. My education having been somewhat restricted and limited, I do not even know the names of all these castes and I get confused.

Shri Tyagi: Why do you read them?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: That is a pertinent question. Fortunately, I do not reach them much, but sometimes they come before my eyes. As a matter of fact, it has come to my notice, not by reading them directly. I have seen them quoted in some English newspapers, a matter of great amusement for them. I have read it in a foreign paper.

The other point that I was trying to make was that we are sliding on the

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surface of things and we talk of nationalism and Indian unity. Of course, there is truth in it. There is truth in our nationalism. There is truth in our belief and conviction of unity. That is perfectly true. But I do say that the conception of Indian unity and that conception of nationalism is a peculiar one, limited to each individual or groups of one way of thinking. It is not the common idea of nationalism. My idea of nationalism or my group's is different from that of somebody. It is largely conditioned by our social system. For generations we have been brought up in our social structure of caste system and the like. It is not an easy thing to get out of them. And it pursues us wherever we go.

People talk that linguistic provinces have given rise to this. It may be that the idea of linguistic provinces has encouraged this idea. But it is much deeper than any linguistic province, and that is why I gave you the example of an Indian living in Rangoon, Singapore or Ceylon, places where there are many Indians—a few, of course, cannot easily separate like that—who always go by their caste group or language group. They hardly meet each other.

It is an amazing thing, and it is a terribly weakening thing. And if one good thing this tragedy in Assam has done, it has brought this skeleton out of our mental cupboard. At least, I hope it has brought it out so that we could see this very ugly thing, what it is. It is a bad thing, and it is there in our minds and hearts. It is no good any of us taking pride that we are above it, and we get excited. We may get excited about many things. We get most excited when that corner of our mind is hit. Then we get frightfully excited.

Our friend, Shri Hoover Hynniewta, yesterday delivered a very interesting speech, I do not know what about. He was so frightfully excited when he quoted the famous American: "give me liberty or give me death". Now, I do not know where death came into the picture. I suppose the context was what the Assamese should have as their official language but he put it in the level of liberty and death.

Shri Hynniewta (Autonomous Districts—Reserved—Sch. Tribes): I said liberty to think, the most precious of our liberties. If I do not have the liberty, then I cease to be a human being. It is better to have death rather than to lose the liberty of thinking.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: You are perfectly right. Liberty of thinking, of course, is necessary. Nobody, not even the greatest tyrant has ever succeeded in taking away the liberty to think. Sometimes what the tyrants have done is to prevent the expression of the thought, the public expression of the thought. Thinking, nobody has been able to check yet, at any time.

Now, where is the question of liberty to think, or liberty just coming in at all! His conclusions may be right or wrong, but I am merely saying that if we are thinking of these petty matters, relatively petty matters we lose all our standards, all our mental equilibrium; we become unbalanced almost in our . . .

Shri Jaipal Singh: I think what he meant was liberty to think in his mother tongue, and not in Kashmiri.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: How does that come? That does not come into the picture at all.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I am not criticising the hon. Member. I am merely pointing out a certain tendency. I can mention several hon. Members too, though not in criticism but to show how one is apt to be swept away. If he says he wants to adhere to a certain language he believes in, I accept that. If he says "I do not want a language to be imposed on me" I accept that. That is a different matter. But it is the context in which these hings are said that matters, and sometimes, I venture to say, it becomes all wrong and all too narrow, an intolerant context, a context in which it becomes curious and, curiously enough, the idea of tolerance becomes converted into intolerance over another language. It is a very curious thing, and even in this language question, if Shri Hoover says "I want the right to use or speak in my language" well and good. But, if he says "I am going to prevent the other fellow from doing this" there he is all wrong.

Shri Hynniewta: No, I cannot be that much mad.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I know that. I agree that the degree is limited.

But my point is,—honestly, I am not dealing with this matter in a frivolous way—what I am venturing to submit to this House is this. The Assam-Bengal trouble is a very very serious aspect of our national problem, a basic thing on which the whole future of this country depends. In this matter everyone of us has to blame himself, and I gladly include myself. I do not know what I am. I cannot judge of myself, how narrow I am in my thinking. How can I say what I am when one cannot judge oneself? But each one of us is narrow, because of our traditions, our inheritance in social matters, not in high philosophical matters. When we come down to our traditions we have been accustomed to, each one, in the ultimate analysis, is confined to the little kitchen in his corner—not joining the other people, not allowing them to enter our kitchen, not eating with them or entering in marriage with them. Half of our lives have been spent in sticking to these limitations and rules. Now, is it not surprising? And that is the reason why we in India, individuals apart, of course, are amongst the most difficult to get on with a foreigner. Often, there are criticisms here, whether it is on foreign affairs or anything, why is this done and that not done, as if we command the world, as if we can order people about, not realising that sometimes the fault lies in ourselves.

People come from abroad. Sometimes they may discuss philosophical theories, but they find an odd society in India with which they cannot easily mix. They are surprised. Nowhere else, or at any rate hardly anywhere—there are one or two exceptions—is this kind of thing found. So this mixture of the widest catholicity of thought or of philosophy which has made us great in many ways and the narrowest social life is a curious mixture. Of course, both do not apply to us fully now. We have outgrown them and we are outgrowing them. But they apply to us enough to affect us and to affect our political life. It did not matter much when we functioned in our own narrow grooves. But when we bring in democracy and open the door to every group to function as it wants, that ancient evil comes up. It comes up and comes into conflict with the other group which is coming up, the different groups each talking in its own language of nationalism coming up with the other nationalism.

What is, after all, what we call, communalism? When this question of Muslim communalism or Hindu communalism arose, you may well have described the two as Hindu nationalism and Muslim nationalism and you would have been correct. They were different nationalisms. They came into conflict with each other. The Hindus had the advantage because they grew up in this country and they could call their own communalism nationalist more easily because they were a part of India and had nowhere else to go to. The Muslims had a difficulty in that they could not put on that garb so easily. But the fact is that they were both communalism. They were both that communal type of nationalism—not everybody, I mean. I am talking about these various movements.

However, so this is the basic issue and we shall have to face this. We shall not face it by fussing about linguistic provinces and all that. It may be that has encouraged it—possibly it has. But it is deeper than that. And anyhow the linguistic provinces or whatever they are are there. We have to accept them. We are not going

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to cut up India again and again. We have to acept them for what they are. In accepting them we have to get used to the idea of living in peace and amity with each other and not raise this absurd bogey of language all the time. It is quite absurd, I think.

There are certain difficulties involved as Dr. Sushila Nayar said. In the rest of the world every educated man is supposed to know three or four languages. It is only in India that he resents being asked to learn a language. It is a most extraordinary thing. So it is a basic issue and it is a dangerous issue. We are not going to solve it by a debate here or by any committees or by anything else. But, at any rate, if all these events in Assam have made us think about these issues and make the country think, this is a good thing, because our first step towards taking any action is to be mentally aware to the question and then try to solve it.

I have ventured to say all this to try to create a background for our thinking because otherwise we live in an excited state and we shall not be able to take any step. My second point is this. We are dealing in this matter not with some malefactors, some mischiefmakers, some scoundrels and the like. Of course, there are mischiefmakers and malefactors. Get hold of them and punish them, whoever they may be. There can be no doubt whatever that in a matter of this kind you must respect nobody. I mean to say that you must not allow anybody because of party, because of some thing else or because of position to escape if he is a real malefactor. I admit it. There is no question about that. No party is going to flourish if it takes refuge in sheltering evil men. That should be quite clear. Let us punish them. But the fact remains that evil men flourish on such occasions because they are in tune with the mind of the multitude. That is a fact to remember. Evil men flourish only on such things. The scoundrel flourishes only on such things, otherwise he is an ordinary theif or a person who commits arson. It is a Police case. But the moment he comes into tune with the mind of the multitude, it is another type of thing. That you have to see.

Acharya Kripalani: He can also create the mind of the multitude. I am afraid, here the case was that the mind of the multitude was created by these people.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Naturally they act and react on each other. But the mind of the multitude has been created, if I may say so, by generations not by a speech, by years and years. Even here somebody quotes somebody who delivered a speech ten years ago or thirteen years ago showing a succession of events, what Shri Bardolai said and what the Governor of Assam said in 1947. That itself shows a certain connection. Why? Why did Shri Bardolai say that? The Governor was Syed Akbar Hydari at that time—not an Assamese person but an outsider.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: That was the Government's speech. Obviously he was doing it on behalf of his Government.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Maybe, I cannot say. I doubt very much. A general sentiment may be there, but the words were his own. However, what I am saying is this. Here you go back 13 years. Why was that position 13 years ago? Let us think of it. Why was that position taken? Was it sheer cussedness. Why did that idea come into the head of apparently a good decent Assamese people and leaders. There must be some reason for that. I do not know. But I am merely pointing out these things. These are not sheer madness. When an idea comes to a good mind you have to have a reason for this. I say these things go far back. But I entirely agree with Acharya Kripalani that on such an occasion such things can be whipped up undoubtedly. Undoubtedly they were and that too in the course of several months.

I was in Assam earlier this year. I forget the month, maybe February or March or some other month. In front of the University I stopped for some kind of welcome by the students. They presented me with an address. Half the address was about language, just saying that they passionately want this language. At that time I knew and felt about it. I realised why it was quite so passionately felt. Anyhow I told them, "Well and good. It is a good thing. But this is not the time to raise this question. There are other more important things" or something like that. So this thing, of course, has been going on and the language question for them had become a symbol not by itself the language. It was a symbol of their individuality, of their existence as Assamese, of their future and all that. When a thing becomes a symbol like this, rightly or wrongly, it becomes difficult to deal with it. It becomes above reason. It is an article of faith or something. It gradually developed.

This has swept over practically, broadly speaking, every Assamese. Every Assamese felt that way about the language issue. Some felt it more, some less. Some wise men, like Shri Chaliha, feeling that way and yet seeing the other side too, seeing the consequences of some action tried to check this, tried to reason with it and tried to adopt a middle course because he is a man of vision and of tolerance. His attempt is always to win over people and not to enrage them. But broadly speaking this was the fact that language became the symbol of something. They passionately desired it. When this happens it is relatively easy for it to be exploited for wrong ends. That is where, as Acharya Kripalani perhaps intended, the wrong people came in and excited them, moved them to wrong action because the ground had been prepared for all that was happening.

My point in saying all this is that you must distinguish in order to deal with a situation like this between the evildoer and a certain symbol and mass opinion of a people. You have to distinguish and if you do not distinguish between them, if you feed both alike, then the evildoer becomes the hero of the people. You have to separate that. You must not allow him to become the hero of the people because anyhow you have to deal with the whole people. It is a very difficult thing and most difficult in a democratic society. You cannot do this. You cannot do it.

Many hon. Members have suggested various steps that the Central Government and other Governments should have taken. I do not think they have quite realised what the consequences of those steps might be either on democratic functioning or even on getting the results they aim at. After all, we aim at results, whatever the results are. We find, owing to a combination of circumstances, past history, peculiar feelings, whatever they are—I do not know whether they are justified or not—a certain feeling from the British times of the Assamese being suppressed, being sat upon, by the British, by others, being ignored, and then a certain release of that feeling coming. They expressed this release in curious unfortunate language. I am talking of 10 or 12 years ago as the language quoted shows. It shows rightly or wrongly this feeling of release. Why did they get that feeling which they had to express in this way? It was a kind of a resurgent limited nationalism coming up: bad because it was limited and good because it is a new spirit. You see good and evil mixed up. It is difficult to separate them sometimes. Any way, here is this problem which has led to these disastrous consequences.

In spite of being there, in spite of reading a large number of memoranda and papers, I would not venture to say positively and definitely, as deffinitely as many hon. Members, who probably know less than what I do about the facts, I mean, have done, about who is the guilty party. Of course, everybody knows as to what has happened. There is no doubt about that. It is a

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very grave tragedy, a bad thing, not only because it is an evil in itself, but because it is a novel feature of a people in one State being driven out either by force or through sheer panic, most of it by panic. I am sorry that anybody should go away by panic from anywhere, because, panic is so infectious that it is difficult to deal with it.

If I criticise the press, I do not mind if they have given wrong news or this and that. In a moment like this, one cannot balance these things because there is excitement. They may give wrong news. But I do think that what the press has erred is, they created or rather helped in intensifying a sense of panic. That is my objection. It may be that they themselves got so angry that they did it. I am not criticising them. But, I do think that in a situation which is a difficult situation, which is a panicky situation and you want to hold it—it is on the verge; you hold it or it goes to pieces—every little thing counts. If the press wants to hold it, they can help in holding it; if they do not, they can upset and we cannot hold. That is my feeling in this matter.

Evil happened there in a big way. We have to face this situation. Hon. Members have repeatedly blamed the Central Government and the Assam Government and all that. My colleague the Home Minister took upon himself the responsibility for what the Central Government did. I am not prepared to permit him to shoulder all this responsibility. I come into the picture too. I am at least equally responsible. We are all responsible certainly. If we have erred or if we have erred deliberately or unconsciously, then, judge us and punish us: either this House or the country. But, I must confess that, looking at this picture, thinking of it again and again, I may tell you that we have given a good deal of thought to it. If any one imagined that we have thought of it casually or ignored it, it would be completely wrong. I know that my colleague the Home Minister has lived a tortured life these months, the month of July and later, because, there were so many things to trouble and disturb us. This Assam matter has disturbed him and troubled him more than anything, I know, both because it was bad and because, as I said, it was a symbol of evil, a symbol of our weakness, of our failings, disruptiveness, narrowness of mind, incapacity to function together, always a tendency to go to pieces. It was a terrible picture. It was a spectre of the old thing coming out. We felt that way.

It really is not clear to me and I do not understand what in these circumstances, the Central Government could have done: major thing or minor thing. Because, even in the latter half of June, we were worried, not too much worried. I never thought like that. After all, it was our misfortune that such events like this happen in various parts of India. Almost everyday, some odd thing happens. That certainly is our misfortune. We have become rather accustomed to reading this kind of thing. Bad as it was, we had no idea that it would develop in this way. For my part, it is only in the beginning of July that it came as a deep shock to me. Even before that, of course, we were writing as to what is happening, constantly in touch, by telephone, by letter, etc. I do not think it would be right for us to criticise, let us say, the Governor who told us on the 28th of June that he hoped that in two or three days time, this will die down. That was his judgment and he is not a man whose judgment we should not value. That was his impression. Maybe he was wrong. That is the impression he gave us. Then came the succession of events early in the beginning of July.

Immediately, the moment, in fact before the 4th of July, the Army was asked to go there. It is before the 4th of July and the Army was present in some part of Gauhati on the 4th of July and progressively afterwards, it came to other places, on the 6th to Shillong and so on. The Army was sent. That is the biggest thing that the Central Government can do.

Some one asked, why didn't you allow the Army to spread out and put an end to all these things, and why did you allow it apparently to function under the civil administration. That means, really, why didn't you declare martial law there and hand over the whole State to the Army? That is a possibility. It did not strike us because we do not think in terms of martial law. However, there it was. But, I do not think martial law would have made any immediate difference, because, the Army moves in special ways. The Army does not take risks. It moves in large columns here, there and everywhere. It is not like the police, you put one Army man here and two army men there. They do not like it at all.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Are we to understand that the Army was called out on the 4th of July and between the 4th and the next eight days when all this havoc took place, the Army could not do anything?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: The Army did function where it could. When this kind of things happen at a hundred places simultaneously, . . .

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta—Central): There is one report that for a two mile stretch there was continuous devastation of houses all over the place near Nowgong. This is the report which we have got from the Women's delegation—a two mile stretch of continuous devastation. I cannot understand why the Army cannot function.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I have seen Nowgong. You are right. There is a big stretch. I cannot give you exactly an answer whether the Army was situated there or not. But, I do know that on the 4th it was in Gauhati. Gauhati is a central place. It went to Shillong on the 6th. It may be that it had not reached Nowgong then. On the 6th all this happened. You must remember that all this happened on the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th; on 3 or 4 days they happened. It may be, within a day or two it got there. It could not have got there more swiftly because of the simultaneous nature of these things.

I asked a Police Superintendent, what were you doing. Because somebody complained to me that he telephoned to the police station to come and protect him as he was being attacked or he was told he was going to be attacked that evening. He was a Bengalee gentleman, and he said that he had given notice to the police station that he had heard that he was going to be attacked in the evening or two hours later, but nobody came. So, I hauled up the policeman. He said: "Do you know, Sir, it was bedlam in my police station. Hundreds of calls coming from everywhere, and my having a dozen or twenty men at my disposal. There was perfect bedlam, what could I do?" I am merely narrating a fact, I am not justifying it. It shows that the police force was neither adequate nor competent—agreed. It shows, as has been admitted, that the administration collapsed. All that is agreed. I am merely narrating things as one found them. And all this happened practically in the course of four or five days, this intensive thing; from the 5th to about the 10th practically all this happened, and they just could not cover it during that time. Maybe, the Army could have moved more swiftly, whatver it was, I cannot judge, but there was no civil authority stopping them. In fact, ultimately the disturbed Areas Ordinance was applied to two miles of either side of the river Brahmaputra, and this was handed over to the Army.

Shri Hem Barua: Five miles on both sides of the railway.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Quite correct, not the Brahmaputra. That meant really covering every city, practically every city. In fact, that was handed over to the Army.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: On which date?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I could not tell you, I am sorry, but certainly when I was there, it was in the Army's possession.

Shri Sadhan Gupta: After the incident.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Everything was over, and then it was done.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: No, no, not that. About the 6th or 7th or 8th, possibly in those days.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Your version makes us even more worried, because it seems that the Army went there, and there are absolutely good roads connecting Gauhati, Nowgong, Jorhat and everything, and they cannot move, they are immobilised for days on end. It is a terrible admission.

Shri Indrajit Gupta (Calcutta—South West): How can they move unless the civil administration order them to move?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Yes, that is true.

The Army wants to have fixed centres from which it can function, it wants to get places. Let us say Nowgong is a centre. It goes and sits down in sufficient numbers, then it probes out. It will not go out in small penny packets searching for people. It gets lost, it is afraid of getting lost. It is not used normally to dealing with this public kind of thing. However, I cannot explain what the Army did, I have not gone into that matter, nor am I competent to do so.

What I was driving at was this,—I am sorry, Sir, I have taken up so much time—that we have to remember that this is a matter in which evildoers have functioned, but they have taken advantage of powerful sentiments of the people which they themselves, as Acharya Kripalani said, may have incited. It is true.

Acharya Kripalani: If you do not mind my interrupting you for a little while, all your arguments come to this that this happened just like an earthquake or a flood, and such things may happen again and we will be helpless against those natural calamities.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: That is not my point. I am sorry that I have not been able to explain my meaning. I do not think so. It is difficult for me to go back again in my argument.

I have merely narrated as things came to us, and what I am begging this House to consider is this, how to deal with the situation. That is the problem before us. I am not going too much into history.

In dealing with the situation, you have to deal with the evildoer, you have also to deal with the mass sentiment, that is my point. And if you deal with the mass sentiment in the way you deal with the evildoer, then you cannot succeed. You can always succeed in the sense of martial law, that is not success, dealing with everybody through martial law. The moment you revert from martial law to something else, you come back to a worse position. That is the difficulty in dealing with it.

I speak subject to correction, and I am not for the moment including, what shall I say, Assamese Members or Bengalee Members here who may have gone to Assam, but I am rather thinking of others who may have visited Assam during these last few weeks, whoever they might be. Because they have gone there, they have probably got some reactions of the position there, or the situation there. You will find that they speak a somewhat different language from those who have not gone there. It is a fact to remember, because they have experienced something. It is not a question of reading a book, or reading Shri A. P. Jain's report. It is a feeling of sensing a situation which is highly important where masses are concerned. So, you will find every one, as far as I know, who has gone there, to whatever party he belongs—it is not a question of this party or that—presenting a picture. For instance, every one of them has reacted rather strongly to the idea of a comprehensive judicial enquiry. Logically, the argument is absolutely right, it should be there, and I accept it, but I am merely pointing out how people react to it, having seen the situation there and realising that this might, instead of starting the healing process, hinder it, might create difficulties. It is a fact, it may be an unjustified fact, there it is.

Take another thing, see how this thing cuts across parties. I do not know, I honestly do not know, what the views of the P.S.P. or the Communist Party are about the language question in Assam, I have no idea, but I was reading the other day, four or five days ago, the Assam Branch of the Communist Party supporting the demand of Assamese as the State language. They are perfectly entitled to do that, but I doubt very much if the Bengal Branch will do that, that is my point.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Now the Central Executive has adopted a resolution that Assamese will be regarded as the principal State language, and that the other groups should have a round table conference to find out their opinion. It is in Shri Jain's Report.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I will not go into that.

Shri Sadhan Gupta: Every branch will follow it.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: What I saw was slightly different from what Shrimati Renu Chakravartty said,—slightly. It did not say "the principal State language", but "the State language", and that Cachar and other areas may do their district work in their local languages, which is a different thing. That is not your Central Executive resolution.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: That was an old document, and it is only in the light of the experiences gained after that the new resolution is there.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: It is obvious the hon. Member knows more than I do about his party; how can I tell him?

Shri Sadhan Gupta: It is an annexure in the Report.

Shri Tyagi: It is a revelation to us.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I think it is after the Report that a resolution was passed in Assam on the 28th or 29th August. It is after the Report.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: 17th August.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: The one I have read is of the 28th August. I am not wishing to press that. I am merely saying....

Shri Vasudevan Nair (Thiruvella): It was 28th July, and after that in August our Central Executive passed a resolution.

Shri Tyagi: Anyway, a fact is a fact.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: It does not really matter. I am sorry I have not got it here, because I really have a cutting with me, I have not brought it.

Shri A. P. Jain: It is in page 8 of the Report.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I am not interested in your Report in this conection. I am saying something that happened after this Report was passed. I am saying something that happened three or four days ago. I think it was on the 27th or 28th or 29th August, or just at that time that the Assam Branch of the Communist Party passed a resolution.

16 hrs.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: It is not a question of the Assam Branch of the

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Communist Party passing a resolution. The Bengalis in the Brahmaputra Valley also supported the idea of Assamese as the official language. It was not because of the declaration of Assamese as the official language or the declaration against it that the riots took place. It has much deeper roots.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: This has nothing to do with riots. What I was pointing out was how this matter has cut across party lines; that is, the party branches have been pulled this way and that way by mass sentiment in that area. That is my point. Of course, a party may by its discipline pull them up. That is a different matter. But, for the moment, they are swept by the sentiment of that place. It is quite natural; if it is a mass party, it has to feel that way. This is the position. How are you going to deal with this?

Obviously, the martial law method is basically not going to produce results. The martial law method becomes necessary and essential where there is constant disorder; you have to quell it. Ever since, roughly, the middle of August, there was no disorder on that scale. There were incidents, individual incidents happening; true; undesirable; there was apprehension, fear, if you like, in the minds of people; true. But the Army was spread out. Even apart from the Government, the Army was spread out in most places, and nothing could happen on a big scale. Therefore, even the administration, on that date, because I was there then, was functioning with a measure of efficiency; the administration admittedly had broken down previously except in two or three districts. And although the Chief Minister Mr. Chaliha was lying ill, the other Ministers, I felt, were doing a good job of work there, hard work. It was very difficult then to retrieve what had happened, to pull back; they were working very hard and fairly efficiently. We decided to give them special officers, competent officers from here and all that; we did send some officers, and we are still sending them. And we felt that the only way to control the situation, the best way rather, was through the government.

Now, it was possible to push the government out. What would take its place? Either President's rule or something else. There was no other Government there; we felt that if we did that, we have to function in almost a vacuum; that is, the support that we might get, the popular support, would be completely lacking. Everybody in Assam, every group and party was against it. Of course, we could impose our will by the Army. The Army was there, to some extent everywhere. The Government there was not opposing our will. They asked for our advice, and we gave advice to them, and they followed it. They asked the Governor for advice. The Governor would have been our agent. The Governor was working very closely with them. So, we felt that any other step would, though it might perhaps be advantageous for a few days or weeks, ultimately come in the way of all the processes that we were working for. And we decided, therefore, to carry on with this, and we thought, we were not sure at any time, when it might not be necessary to have President's rule; if it did not function, then we do it.

Shri Jaipal Singh: I only want a clarification from the Prime Minister. I am only trying to understand what the Leader of the House has told us. If once it is admitted that the administration has failed somewhere, but everybody says, no, do not come in, constitutionally, what is the position? Once they knew here at the Centre, are they not bound to step in? I am only trying to understand the position.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava (Hissar): Certainly not. The use of the word "May" in Article 356 shows it is discretionary with the President.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: But that surely depends; if I had been, for instance, in Assam, and saw the picture in Assam on the 6th or the 7th or the 8th, I would have said, yes, you must come in, there must be some kind of Central intervention. As a matter of fact, you must remember that Central intervention in a big way comes in when the Army goes there in a big way. It was there. Apart from sending the Army, the only thing we could have done was to remove the Ministry, and, maybe, send two or three senior officers there to assist the Governor. That is the only change. The real thing was that the Army was broadly in control of the law and order situation.

An Hon. Member: That is not the position.

Shri Vasudevan Nair: The Army could not move.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: That is not correct. The Army not only could move, but it was in full control of that two or three or four-mile zone on either side of the railways, and several towns were in that zone. Of course, some of the villages were a little further away.

I have taken a lot of time, but there are just one or two matters that I should like to mention. My point is, therefore, that we must look at this from this broad point of view, and look at it from the point of view of solving these basic problems there rather than putting some kind of *marham* or something and hiding the sores which will break out again. Therefore, we have tried to look upon it from that point of view.

We have separated two aspects. And the two do not go togther. When you talk about judicial enquiry and talk about punishment, the two do not go together. One is judicial enquiry into basic matters; the outlook is different; the timing is different, that is, how long it will take. And if you mix the two up, those who are to be punished will also be mixed up with the basic causes and remain unpunished. It will delay matters. The whole approach is different. Therefore, the two cannot be mixed up. It will be harmful to both, harmful to punishing those who are to be punished, and harmful for the other enquiry; it gets mixed up with smaller details of punishment instead of looking at basic causes. Therefore, the two have to be separate. We shall deal with the one as early as possible, and that can be dealt with best by local enquiries, good enquiries, good people conducting them, of course, and let those guilty be punished. As it is, there are four thousand or more people arrested. It may be that some of the principal instigators have escaped. Acharya Kripalani and other colleagues might remember the old days when there used to be Hindu-Muslim riots. We found, it was my experience, that after the riot, the peace committees that were formed invariably consisted of the biggest scoundrels in the place, both Hindus and Muslims. They came together.

Shri Jaipal Singh: Are they still there?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: We do not have those riots now. What I mean to say is that those who instigated the riots came together in these peace committees. There was some virtue in that, no doubt. I have no doubt that in Assam too, probably some of the peace committees functioning now may well have as members some of the instigators of the riots: How do I know? It is quite possible. "They may even go and show their generosity and help in other ways.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: You must know at least the agents.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: However, the point is that these have to be separate. I do submit that the mixing up of the two together is to lose both. And one is a thing which

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

should be done, that is, the local enquiries, as quickly and as rapidly as possible, and then the other thing may be taken up.

I am not for the moment laying stress on a very important aspect which the Ajit Prasad Jain delegation has stressed and which all do, who know anything about it, namely that we are dealing in Assam as in Bengal with imponderables. These are not easy things to handle, dealing with popular passions, popular sentiments, very difficult things. That is why I beg of the press to be careful in dealing with these matters and try to start the healing process. Therefore, I beg of everybody to start that process, not suppressing a fact; I am not asking for any suppression, but to give a whole tone of healing. What should our look be? I am all for punishment of the guilty. But should we set out with a policy which looks a policy of revenge and reprisal, or of punishment, that is, punishing those who are guilty, of course? The basic policy is that we should have a healing, a getting together, because we are dealing with masses of people who have to live together; and they have to live in peace or live in hostility. That is the main approach of this. And if you acccept that approach, then you have to measure and count every step from that point of view. Mind you, this does not mean being at all soft or lenient to those who are guilty, whether it is a party or whether it is an individual.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Yesterday, the hon. Prime Minister favoured competent high level judicial enquiries immediately on a regional basis. Does he resile from that position and make it more vague?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Not at all; I want enquiries, local enquiries; as far as I can see, they have to be judicial; I cannot guarantee that everywhere they must be, but presumably, they have to be judicial. 'Judicial' does not mean finding all the High Court judges of India and putting them there, but 'judicial' may mean a district judge or whatever it is. It means locally conducting these inquiries. I hold to that definitely, what I said yesterday, and I am prepared to repeat it.

As regards the other inquiry, I submit that it cannot just be held in the present atmosphere of Assam or West Bengal. It may be vitiated. There are too much passions about. You cannot get at the truth when a man's mind is distracted by passion, prejudice and anger. The basic thing is that if you take a step which actually prevents the return of the refugees, then you are not serving anybody's cause. That is the difficulty, because that is the main thing, to get them back and then proceed with other things.

So I do submit that the general attitude of the Government now in regard to this matter, which my hon. colleague, the Home Minister, and I have ventured to place before this House is, in the circumstances, probably—I am not dogmatic; I do not know what the future will bring—the best course to be adopted. Therefore, I would prefer this House to give its sanction to this policy being continued.

There is one small thing....

Raja Mahendra Pratap (Mathura): Please send the members of the Bharat Sevak Samaj and Sarvodaya and Sant Vinoba Bhave.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: As a matter of fact, Sarvodaya people are working there, and they are working very well. There are plenty of good people working there.

The Deputy Minister of Community Development and Co-operation (Shri B. S. Murthy): Perhaps he wants to go there.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Shri Atulya Ghosh referred to what I had said the other day about Independence Day and its celebration or lack of celebration in Calcutta or West Bengal. Now, I want to make it clear that so far as the annual party which is given on Independence Day at the Raj Bhavan was concerned, not holding it was entirely a matter for the Governor to consider in regard to the general circumstances. If it did not fit in with circumstances or was an irritant, then it should not be held. But what I feel—and I would submit this for consideration of some of my hon. friends—was not right at all was the display of black flags on Independence Day, not only display of black flags but forcible removal of national flags from many houses.

Some Hon. Members: Shame, shame.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Please do not say 'Shame', because all these things were done when people were angry. When one is angry, there is no question about it. But the point to remember is that to encourage such a sentiment is not right. The individual who did it is not to blame because he was swept away by sentiment. That is what I venture to say; it represents a sentiments which would spread all over and India will come to great grief.

Among the amendments moved, I would accept the amendment moved by Shri Atulya Ghosh.

Shri Atulya Ghosh: There may be a misunderstanding. We were not a party to the black flag demonstration.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I know that. I am not directly accusing anybody, but it is not a nice thing on such a day to have black flags or to go about burning effigies, although they are perfectly justified in burning my effigy whenever they choose.

Shrimati Renuka Ray: I want to seek a clarification. The Prime Minister said in his speech yesterday that certain judicial inquiries, zonal ones, would be set up immediately. Today he did not repeat it. I would like to know what is the position.

An Hon. Member: He said so.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Nothing is going to be done immediately. It takes a little time to take any step.

Some Hone. Members *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: He has already answered questions. Shri H. N. Mukerjee had asked a question and he answered it.

Shri Prabhat Kar (Hooghly): May I ask one question?

Mr. Speaker: No more clarification is needed. I will put the amendment of Acharya Kripalani to the vote of the House.

Shri Naushir Bharucha (East Khandesh): I want my amendment No. 3 to be put to vote, because I take it that Government have accepted the policy contained in that.

Mr. Speaker: I will come to that. I will first put amendments which are not likely to be accepted by Government. In that order, I will take up the amendments.

I will take up Acharya Kripalani's Amendment No. 7 first.

Shri Jaipal Singh: Before you put it to vote, I would like you to reconsider your decision. You have got Nos. 1 to 6 before No. 7, which have not come up before the House yet. Your explanation is that amendments that are likely to be rejected by Government should be put first. Is that the correct procedure or do we not go in the order 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and so on?

Mr. Speaker: Under the Rules, the Speaker can pick out any amendment he chooses.

Acharya Kripalani: May I suggest one thing? The Prime Minister has said that there will be an inquiry. So I do not see why my amendment should not be accepted. We have not specified time.

Mr. Speaker: I agree. Is the hon. Member, therefore, withdrawing his amendment?

Acharya Kripalani: No, no. I want them to accept what they have said.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I prefer the language and wording of Shri Atulya Ghosh's amendment which I have accepted.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Because he is a party man.

Mr. Speaker: In view of what the hon. Prime Minister has said, there seems to be an amount of agreement. Does the hon. Member withdraw his amendment?

Acharya Kripalani: No, no. I want them to accept it (*Interruptions*).

Mr. Speaker: Then I will put Acharya Kripalani's amendment No. 7 to the vote of the House. . .

I would like to make one point clear. Shri Jaipal Singh brought it to my notice that the object of both the amendments—Acharya Kripalani's amendment and the amendment of Shri Atulya Ghosh is that there should be a judicial enquiry. The only difference between the two is that while amendment No. 7—Acharya Kripalani's amendment—does not mention the time, it may be immediate, the other amendment mentions that the enquiry be conducted at an appropriate time.

An Hon. Member: That is not the only difference.

Mr. Speaker: So, Shri Jaipal Singh suggested that if I put amendment No. 7 to the vote of the House, the other one would be barred.

Shri Tyagi: Parliament is keen on every word used. We do not vote for meaning; we vote for words.

Mr. Speaker: Therefore, I wanted to make it clear that the one does not bar the other.

Shri Naushir Bharucha: In substance both are the same.

Mr. Speaker: I am not carried away by the substance.

Shri Tyagi: Even if there is a shade of difference in meaning it is enough and Parliament has discretion to use.

Shri Jaipal Singh: Mr. Speaker, I thought that I may assist the House in understanding the situation and that is why I ventured to suggest this point. Both the amendments deal with enquiry. My friend Shri Atulya Ghosh introduces the word 'appropriate', which as you know, I objected to yesterday and I still object. There is nothing to prevent, in my amendment or Acharya Kripalani's amendment, the same 'appropriate' idea being there . . .

Some Hon. Members: No.

Shri Jaipal Singh: If my hon. friends will be a little patient and non-violent, I venture to say that there is nothing immediate about it. The whole point of order I was raising is this. If my friends over there were to reject our amendment, then the next amendment, their amendment on the issue of enquiry, *per se* by itself, quite apart whether it is at the 'appropriate' time or otherwise, would be ruled out. My friend Shri Tyagi may know law and English better. I do not know.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: There is a vital difference. As far as I remember, Acharya Kripalani's amendment or Resolution is for an enquiry into the disturbance while ours deals also about the causes and remedies.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: I think it is exactly what you said. There will be a quick and swift enquiry. That is what you said.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: That is a separate enquiry—not this.

Shri Khadilkar (Ahmednagar): It is in your discretion to put the amendment of Shri Atulya Ghosh to the vote of the House.

Mr. Speaker: Now, this is the view of Shri Jaipal Singh. Is that the view of Acharya Kripalani also?

Acharya Kripalani: The words that have been used by Shri Ghosh make it an indefinite time. That is all the objection.

Shri Atulya Ghosh: It is not indefinite time. 'Appropriate' means, when the time is appropriate. It may be today, tomorrow or a few days hence.. .... (*Interruptions.*)

Acharya Kripalani: May I also submit that the Prime Minister, I think, has misunderstood my amendment? It does not preclude a couple of enquiries or two kinds of enquiries. He has already said that he is immediately undertaking one.

Shri Barman (Cooch-Behar—Reserved—Sch. Castes): Mr. Speaker, You will find that there is a vital difference. The Prime Minister has just now informed us that in the amendment No. 7, there are two things to be enquired. One is a comprehensive enquiry into the disturbances and the other circumstances leading up to that disturbance whereas in the other amendment, we only recommend a judicial enquiry to enquire into the circumstances leading to the disturbances. We are not recommending this about the disturbances all over Assam. (*Interruptions.*) but at particular places.

Mr. Speaker: If both are the same, I can put the amendment of Shri Atulya Ghosh first to the vote of the House. Nothing prevents me from doing so. If that is done, the other amendment will be barred and I do not think that Acharya Kripalani's desire is that we should bar his amendment. He wants that his amendment should be put to vote.

I find a vital difference between the two. Acharya Kripalani's amendment leaves him open to ask the Government to immediately undertake an enquiry, tomorow morning. So far as the other one is concerned, it says 'appropriate' time.

Shri Jaipal Singh: May I point out, Sir......

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. I will not allow the hon. Member to go on interrupting me like this; it is not right. When once a Resolution is passed by this House, tomorrow morning an hon. Member may get up and ask: what effect has been given to it? Now, so far as the other one is concerned, it leaves it entirely to the discretion of the Government to find out what the appropriate time in when a judicial enquiry may start. That is a vital difference.

The question is:

"That for the original motion, the following be substituted, namely:—

> "This House, having considered the situation in Assam and the Report of the Parliamentary Delegation thereon, presented to the House on the 30th August, 1960, is of the opinion that in view of the recent tragic happenings which have taken place in Assam and have created a sense of fear and insecurity in the minds of the minorities in Assam, a comprehensive enquiry by one or more Supreme Court Judges be instituted to enquire into the disturbances and the circumstances leading up to them and suggest remedies for ensuring adequate protection and

[Mr. Speaker]

> full enjoyment of their rights guaranteed under the Constitution to all citizens and preventing recurrence of such incidents in future." '. (7).

The Lok Sabha divided. Ayes **48**: *Noes* 168.*

The motion was negatived.

Mr. Speaker: Now, I will put the motion moved by Shri Atulya Ghosh. In that case, Shri Naushir Bharucha's will be barred.

Shri Naushir Bharucha: Mine cannot be barred because it is a totally different matter. It only recommends to the Union Government to consider the desirability of assisting the Assam Government by a generous subsidy in the task of prompt rehabilitation of the riot victims in Assam.

Shri Bimal Ghosh: Sir, I would request you to put all the amendments together.

Mr. Speaker: I shall put the amendment standing in the name of Shri Atulya Ghosh and others first. The question is:

> "That for the original motion, the following be substituted; namely:—
>
> "This House, having considered the situation in Assam and the Report of the Parliamentary Delegation thereon, presented to the House on the 30th August, 1960, recommends that the Government should at an appropriate time set up a judicial enquiry to enquire into the circumtances resulting in the disturbances in the State of Assam in the month of July and to suggest steps necessary to prevent the recurrence of such disturbances in the future." ' (5).

The motion was adopted.

Mr. Speaker: I am afraid, all the other amendments are barred. The House has accepted a substitute motion.

16.37 hrs.

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

SIXTY-NINTH REPORT

Mr. Speaker: The House will now take up Private Members' Business.

Sardar A. S. Saigal (Janjgir): Sir, I beg to move:

> "That this House agrees with the Sixty-ninth Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions presented to the House on the 30th August, 1960."

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

> "That this House agrees with the Sixty-ninth Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions presented to the House on the 30th August, 1960."

The motion was adopted.

16.38 hrs.

RESOLUTION RE: DISSEMINATION OF NEWS AND VIEWS BY NEWSPAPERS—*contd.*

Mr. Speaker: The House will now resume further discussion on the Resolution moved by Shri Indrajit Gupta on the 19th August, 1960 regarding dissemination of news and views by newspapers and the amendment moved thereon by Shri K. K. Warior. Out of 2 hours allotted for discussion of the Resolution 20 minutes have already been taken up.

Some Hon. Member *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: Shri Joachim Alva.

Shri Warior (Trichur): Sir, I have moved an amendment.

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*Names of Members who recorded votes have not been indicated under the direction of the Speaker as the photo copy of Division result did not clearly show the names of all Members.

Mr. Speaker: He has moved it already. I have called Shri Alva now, I will call the hon. Member also.

Shri Joachim Alva (Kanara): I oppose the motion, but there are many points in the motion which call for our attention and consideration. The phraseology of the motion is somewhat similar to, or at least we are reminded of, the resolution that came before the House of Commons as a result of the fight put up by the Journalists' Union in Britain. The following motion was adopted by the House of Commons:

> "That having regard to the increasing public concern at the growth of monopolistic tendencies in the control of the Press, and with the object of furthering the free expression of opinion through the Press and the greatest practicable accuracy in the presentation of news, this House considers that a Royal Commission should be appointed to enquire into the finance, control, management and ownership of the Press".

The presentation of news is a very important item in that announcement in the House of Commons as a result of which they had a Commission which made a very extensive study. Thereafter, we too followed suit and all these points were gone into.

The Press Commission in India did go extensively into all these matters, but we have not done enough about it at all. The presentation of news is a very serious matter and calls forth our serious consideration. In 1952, we had about 280 dailies in 13 languages, including the Indian languages of which only 27 were English dailies. That was in 1952. Unfortunately, I have not got the latest figures.

An enquiry was held into the news that was put out by the P.T.I. A kind of survey was done and the survey revealed that 25 per cent of the news was politics in the P.T.I. Then another survey was made into the amount of lines put forth. Out of the 5,100 lines in the A service—A service meant that a daily had to pay Rs. 3,600 to the P.T.I. per month—it was found that 2,300 lines were put out by Reuters. That is the crux of the point. Out of 5,100 lines put out by the P.T.I. 2,300 lines were put out by Reuters. That comes to something between 45 per cent and 50 per cent. That is the crux of the problem. We have come to a stage in our progress when we cannot claim to have a full-fledged, dynamic and vigorous news service in India. What is wrong with us? We are an independent nation. We have got all the sinews of war with us. If we have not got the finance, we get it from abroad. But here is the Indian press, Indian journalism substantially made up of Indian language press, which gave such a great battle during the time of the Indian freedom which is ignored and which is not being served by proper news agencies. We have not yet got a good news agency. It is time that the Government set up a Corporation. I do not know what views the hon. Minister will hold. But it is time that the Government set up a Corporation, presided over perhaps by the Chief Justice of India or whosoever he may be—an eminent and impartial person—and this Corporation should disseminate the news so that we could have a first class news agency which will be the fulcrum and the centre and the real mainspring of our news in India.

In this fight for news agencies, we cannot forget the part played by the great Sadanand, who played a very gallant role from 1930 onwards until the time of his death. The Free Press news agency—the people seem to have forgotten about it—was there. Sadanand made a very gallant attempt and he died in that attempt. He wanted to have a world-comprehensive news service, but the great barons of the Indian press sabotaged it. Some of them joined up with Reuters and saw that it was sabotaged. The Government needed very little

[Shri Joachina Alva]

money to pour out on this scheme and this House would have sanctioned it if there was a scheme like that before us. But the whole scheme fell through. I cannot forget the amount of real service rendered by the late Shri S. Sadanand through those manifold struggles.

Men like K. Srinivasan ("Stalin" Srinivasan) wrote about the Simon Commission in London. I remember his telling me in jail in 1932: "Alva, I lived just on Rs. 80 in London. I did not even buy a toy for my child. I reported faithfully all that the Simon Commission said or did to the Indian press. All that was done so well and so thoroughly. K. Srinivasan was one of the founders of the A.I.N.E.C. He lived on Rs. 80 a month in London in the year 1925,—a long way off. These are the men who built up our news services and the press. Their services are ignored and nothing has come out of it. The PTI is just an offshoot of Reuters, which was the old API. Therein, the people are always fighting for posts and directorships of the news services. But who will control the organisation? Even today, in the whole operation of the PTI, manoeuvres and cliques are going on. The boys who run the service are patriotic, fine, young and able, and they are left to take care of themselves and they do a job because they are compelled to do it and they have to fulfil their tasks in the course of their duties. But there is no protection from the top. The Government of India has failed in its duty of organising a Corporation for news services so that we can have something to boast of on an equal footing with the best foreign news agencies. There we are just stranded!

We had all kinds of conections with Reuters but yet Reuters do not help us to tide over our difficulties. Reuters has its own angle, the angle of the British Empire and the British services. The Associated Press of America or the United Press of America or any other similar news agency in the world has got some first class men. I know many of them personally. But they have to run their news services on their own angle. They have to run it for the country in which they are born.

But what is the position in our country? Though it is 13 years since we gained Independence, still, we cannot have a first class service of our own, of great international status. As I said, the PTI is there. Anyway, we have a monopoly in the news services. We allowed the Free Press to die and the great Sadanand, the great man he was, died as a greatly disappointed and bitter man. Though he suffered from a severe leg ailment, he carried on his news service.

Rajya Mahendra Pratap (Mathura): What is the rule? Can we have a discussion without quorum?

Mr. Speaker: All the non-officials are expected to be present. The hon. Member who is speaking may go on.

Shri Joachim Alva: Then came the question of the United Press of India. The source of inspiration for the United Press of India was again the great Sadanand. He started it. Later on Sen Gupta carried on the work. The Government of India permitted the United Press of India to close down. All that they could have done subsequently was, with a twist of the pen, to permit the press to carry on. Perhaps some amount of money might have been due to them, but the Government of India did not permit it to carry on. And the 400 young men were out of their jobs. We do not seem to worry about our fine, young men, who have been trained to work and who have been thrown into the dust-bin and we do not permit their talents to grow and be utilised in the service of the motherland. We have put another funeral-stone on the United Press of India. Sadanand had already one put on him.

What about our press? The journalist has to live a day-to-day existence. Take, for instance, the *Hindustan Samachar*. I do not care what its politics are!

16·49 hrs.

[SHRI JAGANATHA RAO *in the Chair*]

I do not care who its promoters are. But it is also doing a good job in the sense that it serves the Indian language press. We want news agencies to serve the Indian language press. I quoted the figures earlier. Only 27 out of 280 dailies in India were in English in 1952. There are 13 languages in the language press and we are not catering to them. They cannot afford money. They cannot afford to pay Rs. 3,600 or so which the PTI demands. When this is the kind of variety that we see, when this is the kind of control and dissemination of news, it is time that we put it right.

We must profit by the experience in Ceylon. A woman there has come in to her own a woman who has not been to a university, but a woman who seems to have a lot of courage, guts and stamina in her. She seems to have taken a very courageous step. Ceylon may be a small island physically, but it has set an example to the rest of the world. They knew what were the pangs and throes during the election time. They have come out saying that "we are going to nationalise the press." At least they are taking over two newspaper combines and making them a public corporation. But here we are, a few people or a half a dozen people who own an independent press. They want to dictate to us and control the news. When those two news agencies to which I referred were dead and buried and the funeral, mortuary stones put on them, we have got new ones in their place, coming out like snakes from under the grass. Who are going to run these? They are run by capitalists. Mr. Goenka is running a chain of newspapers. He is now going to start a news agency! Mr. Birla is going to start a news agency, and I think the hon. Minister will give the information at his disposal as to the number of news agencies for which he is going to give facilities for starting. They all seem to be coming out with a vengeance, out of big battalions! But whose views will they put forth? Will they put forth the views of the minions behind them or will they put forth the will of the people? Will they put forth the views of the millions of people of the country? They can start a news agency in no time. But the newspapers which struggled during the darkest days of the Indian freedom movement have been allowed to die. We have allowed those young men to rot in unemployment and we have allowed these news agencies to come. It is time that Government took note of the public opinion in India. If the public opinion in India has not yet been consolidated, if there is no direction from the public opinion, it is time that Government gave direction to public opinion and created a corporation. Instead of going ahead with the proposals for having a real public corporation embracing the Press Trust of India and all these interests, we shall be allowing this mushroom growth of news agencies with high capital behind them, directing the news and directing the policies of the nation. Whether it is the China policy, the Russian policy, the Aemrican policy or the U.K. policy, they shall put forth their own views, which shall not be in tune with the views of the masses of the people of India. These are the great dangers. Though we oppose the resolution of the mover, there are many important things arising out of it, which we cannot ignore and which we can ignore a our own peril.

Reuters has not altogether run into a very healthy line. When I was in Moscow about two years ago, I delivered a lecture to the union of journalists. I rang up Reuters and asked them to kindly put down these two lines: "Alva found great friendship for India in the Soviet Union and he addressed the union of journalists". The gentleman on the other side demanded 50 roubles. My companion said, "We will pay the 50 roubles". We gave him the number of my room

[Shri Joachim Alva]

in the hotel for payment and three days after we asked him whether the message had gone. He said, no; it had not gone! This is how they co-operate. It is not a question of Alva; I am a very small fry. It became a question of what slant to put on the friendship that we found in the Soviet Union for India or that someone felt that this friendship should not be continued. When I took up the matter with the then News Editor in London and now the Chairman of Reuters, Mr. Walton Cole, who is a friend of India, he expressed regret about the incident and even said that the services of the gentleman who answered me on the telephone had been dispensed with much earlier. I say this only to show how news agencies can suppress good news, news which can help in bringing countries and nations together. That is where we have to use the stick and use it very firmly and not allow things to go on as they have been going on for several years.

Even now the PTI is in collaboration with a French Agency—Agence Francaise de Presse. I want to know how this French agency can send out news on the Algerian patriots, what kind of angle it will take and what kind of news it will give to the PTI not only about the Algerian movement, but about the colonies like Morocco, Tunis, Libya, etc. These are very vital things. I would say that it is a great shame that the Government of India and the people of India cannot collaborate together and give a directive, start, to a great news agency which shall vibrate with the sense of Indian natnonalism, which shall vibrate with dynamism. During the Indian freedom movement and even thereafter, we have never been accustomed to toil any untruth. We have never told any lies. To the utmost of our ability, always, during the years of our freedom struggle and even now, we always give expression to truth.

So far as the foreign agencies are concerned; I do not blame them; they have got their own high power politics. Some of them stand for imperialism, of colonialism, this way or that way. Perhaps in the course of their business, they are being directed by the powers that be in their own countries. They perhaps cannot tell all the truth to us. That is not any consideration to us. We want a truthful news agency, true to the nation, so that we can build up our nation. For the reader in India, printed word is the last gospel of truth. We have to direct the Indian reader. If the reader is directed in the wrong channel it will be a bad day for us. That is why I suggest we build up a truthful agency.

Though we on this side of the House are opposed to Shri Gupta's resolution, yet it has raised some important considerations and they cannot be ignored, in the interests of our nation. I hope the hon. Minister who has given much of his time to matters about the press, who was responsible for setting up the Press Commission and who has also brought forward many important proposals, will see to his way, will gather strength and at least next time will come with a proposal that we shall have a first-rate news agency for India, national, built on truth, and built not merely on expediency, as the other news agencies in the world are. We are a young nation wherein independence is concerned, we have not much experience of news agencies. We are not so technically high and advanced as the other nations of the world. I hope we shall have a news agency which will stand for truth and stand for correct information.

Shri Narasimhan (Krishnagiri): Sir, the resolution in my humble opinion is inconsistent with what is described as a free and independent Press. If it is to be implemented, I am really afraid that freedom of expression and freedom of the press will be greatly jeopardised. Therefore, in principle, I oppose it.

While a free and independent press is necessary, it is also incumbent on the press to observe what can be described as restraint. Independence should not mean licence. I am particularly worried about what has come to be known as the yellow press. Referring to yellow journalism, the Press Commission said—I quote:

> "Yellow journalism of one type or another is increasing in this country. It is not confined to any particular area or language, but is perhaps more discernible in some than in others. It was a matter of grave concern to us to find that while instances of such yellow journalism are to be found everywhere, the majority of the journalists who appeared before us had little to say about it, except of course, to condemn it in general terms. Such condemnation too was restricted to a paragraph or two in the memoranda and had not appeared in any of their writings in the Press."

The problem is not only not diminising, but it is steadily increasing. Even in the Indian language field, a number of journals of this type are coming up, vitiating the atmosphere and having a demoralising effect even on the class of persons newly intiated to politics.

A kind of Press Council was also thought of to deal with such matters. One of the tasks of the Press Council was expected to be this kind of control over press standards and such things. But the Press Council has not come into existence and this problem has been allowed to remain like that.

Pending the formation of the Press Council the best thing would be, the newspaper editors and those who are immediately concerned with this aspect of journalism should form a kind of all-India body and observe a voluntary code, create public opinion within the limited field of journalism to maintain a standard and make it impossible for yellow journalism to exist. This must be attended to both by the Government and by the newspaper world. It is not only in economics that "bad displaces good; bad money takes the place of good money" that is what is described as Gresham's Law of economics. But even in this field of journalism, it is sad to see that bad journalism substitutes itself for good journalism. This problem must be attended to at once.

As for news agencies and their existing conditions, more can be said in their favour. We must be happy that we have a kind of news agency functioning all these years. So, it is no use condeming the existing news agency, which has been doing good work all these years and which has played its part well in difficult times. It is also not wise to throw away what we have already got and then create a new thing. The better course would be to improve the existing thing rather than thinking of creating a new thing.

17 hrs.

Shri Warior (Trichur): I have moved an amendment to the Resolution, which seeks to add the words "as recommended by the Press Commission of 1954". This amendment is very important in view of the fact that we do not want to go now at present, in the present context, a step further than what is recommended by the Press Commission. The Press Commission has given us a very elaborate report of the conditions existing in this country, as far as the news agencies are concerned and as far as the newspaper industry is concerned. But we find that after this Report had come to the Government in 1954, with such serious recommendations as such a Commission have made for the first time in the history of the Indian newspaper industry, the Government had sat upon it and did not take it with much seriousness and did not implement the foremost recommendations which, to all intents and purposes, are not at all a reflection upon the existing conditions, as Shri Narasimhan wanted to make out. In fact, going through this Report, one will find that it is an unbiassed report and the findings in it are based on facts and figures.

[Shri Warior]

Here I will only refer to two points, and one of them is about the news agency. Everybody knows that the PTI has the sole monopoly of circulating news in this country, both for English and language papers. There were certain other news agencies like the UPI but they crumbled down as they could not stand the opposition and the competition of the PTI. There are some others, but they are only serving limited purposes and limited areas. We all know, especially people coming from the South know, how much we get from the PTI. There are so many things which I think the ordinary people do not know.

For instance I will give my own experience. We are subscribing to the PTI. They give us a long tape after 9 or 10 in the night. How can a morning paper make use of this long tape? We cannot make use of it, because already the press is closed, and papers come out in the morning without those important news. Even the most important decisions taken in this House cannot be published in a language paper if the news comes from Delhi after 8 or 9 O'Clock. There are some handicaps like this. But the PTI are charging us the full fees. They do not take into account all these difficulties. The difficulties of the language press, like translation etc. are mentioned in this Report.

Apart from that, the PTI indulge in so many discriminatory practices in imposing subscriptions, in giving news and so on. Now they have got three services, called A, B and C. The language papers do not take the A service, because it is a long one out of which we cannot even get a summary. So, naturally B or C service is taken by them. But, sometimes it happens that even the most important speeches or events, both national and international are blacked out from the B services and not even a mention is made. and that is mentioned in this Report also. I will give you an instance here. In the Disarmament Conference Mr. Khrushchev made a long speech for about three hours, covering so many pages. In fact it was a matter for the whole page of an English paper. In the B and C services not even a mention that such a person has made a speech was given.

Then, we have to compete with the bigger English newspapers; not only English newspapers but even with the language papers: There are some big language papers who have their printing machinery and things like that. Smaller language papers in the districts cannot compete with them at all. So, this sort of discrimination in the dissemination of news is practised by a news agency, which has got a monopoly.

I will not go into the details. On page 138, in the last paragraph, the Report says:

> "It is, therefore, difficult to decide on long term arrangements. On this ground they have been charging at higher rates to Newspapers situated at centres other than those mentioned above. In certain cases, when new subscribers came up at the same centre, a slight reduction is made in the the subscription charge of the earlier subscribers. In other case, this concession does not appear to have been given. The reasons given by the Press Trust of India do not appear very convincing. For instance, they have decided to charge the standard rate of subscription at Ambala. As far as we are aware, they have only one subscriber at Ambala and the centre is not, therefore, comparable with the others they have mentioned. There are five subscribers in Kottayam and each of them is being charged Rs. 100 more than the standard subscription."

So, when there are more subscribers, the PTI charges more from each party. When there is an isolated or single subscriber, like in Ambala they charge a lesser amount. Now, if it is a question of the extension of the teleprinter service, if it is a question of other estalishment charges, for the maintenance of the PTI office in those localities, we can understand that. But in Kottayam only one single person with one or two assistants is managing five or six newspapers. In Ambala also the same establishment is necessary, the same teleprinter is necessary, the same service is necessary and so the same charges are necessary. But, still, they charge a lesser amount for Ambala. So, this is an illuminating instance where they are deviating from the normal business standards. If it is only a question of making profits, as was put by some hon. Members, we can understand their charging more for an isolated centre where only one single newspaper is there. But, on the other hand, they charge less when the establishment charges are more, as in the case of Ambala.

There are so many other instances also in other pages of this Report. Why is this done? The Press Commission has dealt with all these aspects in this Report. It is a very illuminating Report. I wonder why the Government had sat upon it all this time. The finding of the Press Commission after an enquiry is that the PTI depends for more than half of its revenue on a few big newspaper organisations and that all the other papers together contribute less than half of their income. Of course, the Commission has rightly pointed out that if the rates favour some subscribers rather than others, the situation has not necessarily been brought about by the voting power of the favourite subscribers. Actually voting power of the favourite subscribers may be less than the voting power of the other subscribers, who are contributing the other half. But actually in PTI the influence is wielded by these few subscribers, on whom the PTI mainly rests for its financial resources, and it is in their interest that the whole show is run according to their liking, and thereby there is so much of discontent, not only on the question of financial subscription and other matters connected with the PTI but also on the question of the dissemination of news.

I will give you only two instances which have come my way and I will close it because there is no necessity of reading the whole thing. I only want this House to take cognisance of such a report. That is all. These two instances are very very interesting. One, to which my hon. friend, Shri Indrajit Gupta also has referred, relates to 1938 when our national movement was at its height. There was a State in the South—I do not want to mention the name of the State—which subsidised the PTI, that is, the then API the parent of the present PTI, to the tune of Rs. 25,000 per month. You must know that the usual charges of the PTI for a Daily comes to about 2,000 or Rs. 3,000 per month for A service. But the State Government gave Rs. 25,000 per month. What was the effect? The effect was that the national movement was absolutely blacked out and all the anti-national movement propaganda of the authorities was given wide publicity, not only here in India but abroad also. Thus the organisation got its full rent from the Government and at the same time the Government was able to use this organisation which was supposed to serve the public for achieving its own end. The interests of the newspaper world, the interests of the genral pople, their freedom movement, their national aspirations, all these were jeopardised for a sum of Rs. 25,000 per month. All these were sold out.

This was in 1938. Recently in 1958-59 also we had a similar instance, when in Kerala there was so much of political turmoil and confusion. The PTI under its present set-up was able to give some fair display of news and they were doing so in the beginning. But all of a sudden we saw a *volte face*. We do not know why. Maybe, wires were pulled behind the scene. We came to know that certain interested and influential parties in Kottayam, the centre of the anti-governmental activities in the State pulled the wires and threatened the PTI. The PTI succumbed to their will and pleasure and began to black out the entire thing or began to dis-

[Shri Warior]

seminate news in a baissed way. Finally, I am given to understand that one of those influential personages was taken on the Board of Directors of the PTI.

These are the stories which are in our own experience. The Press Commission hence has very rightly pointed out that the Press Trust of India should be a public corporation. The recommendation is very clear in its terms. It is paragraph No. 420, page 150.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh (Sasaram): What, 420?

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam): That is why they have recommended this.

Shri Warior: Shall I read this?

Mr. Chairman: No. He has referred to the page. That will do.

Shri Warior: But this is important and the House may take cognisance of it.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member has taken more than 12 minutes.

Shri Warior: It says:

> "The entire responsibility of the management of the new Corporation should be entrusted to the Board of Trustees. The Chairman of the Board should be appointed by the Chief Justice of India." etc.

This is a mandatory recommendation. That is what I hold. It is not an ordinary recommendation that willy nilly if you accept all right, otherwise never mind we make the recommendation. That is not the spirit in which it has been made. It has been made in the spirit of a mandate to the Government that it must be implemented in the interest of India.

If you give me two more minutes...

Mr. Chairman: I am sorry.

Shri Warior: Then the other point will be left out. The most interesting thing is the owners of the newspapers. I have to make only the point about the owners. There are not very many speakers.

Mr. Chairman: There are so many hon. Members who are anxious to speak. I am sorry. I take it that the hon. Member has concluded.

Shri Warior: In the beginning I made only two points.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member has taken more than 12 minutes. So many hon. Members are anxious to speak.

Shri Warior: The usual 15 minutes may be given to me.

Mr. Chairman: No, only ten minutes. Dr. Ram Subhag Singh.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Resolution of Shri Indrajit Gupta calls upon the Government to appoint a committee to go into the question of dissemination of news and views by newspapers in the country with a view to making proposals for ensuring truthfulness, objectivity and good moral standards in the field of journalism. I think, according to the Resolution, the standard of our journalism has been doubted and the hon. Mover has in a way, by implication, thought that reporting made in our papers is not of the nature of truthfulness, objectivity and good moral standards.

I am opposed to it. I think our press is discharging its duty generally properly. I say generally because prior to our independence our press played a role which can never be found to have been played anywhere in the world. At that time they played a very glorious part. But after 1940 or so a tendency crept in our society that we should have a chain of newspapers. That was also natural in a way because when the press took the form or the shape of an industry and when its expenditure went up it became inevitable to pass on the management of the press into the hands of big capitalists. This is a very bad tendency, but it is a fact. Today some of our most powerful papers are under the control of certain big persons. We may accept their views or we may not, but this is the truth today. But because of this can it be doubted that the news and views printed in those papers are not of good moral standards?

In the recent past we found two examples. During the past two months two big events occurred in our country—first the strike and second the Assam situation. Many hon. Members have doubted the role of our press regarding the Assam situation. I also share that view regarding some of the papers published in our eastern zone. But even in those places I can give examples of very good papers. I am not enamoured of any particular paper. *The Statesman* published from Calcutta and Delhi or *Sanmarg* published from Calcutta were not prevented from going to Assam even during the riot period Therefore I say that news and views published in most of our papers are of good standards and they can be favourably compared to any newspaper in the world. I will go to the extent of paying my tribute to the correspondents who report for most of our papers and also to the editors who express views on events that occur in the country and in the world. Our papers generally print good material. They do not indulge in publishing trivial stuff as some of the papers in several parts of the world and even in our country do. From the point of view of politics there are three or four important political parties in our country. The Congress is the majority party, but unfortunately it is not having any paper worth the name.

Shri Rajendra Singh (Chapra): Why? All the papers are yours.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: Maybe, they are ours, but there is not any organ of that nature. You can say that the *AICC Economic Review* is its organ.

Shri Rajendra Singh: What is the use of having one when all the papers are owned by you?

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: You will not be able to understand it. That is your misfortune. Generally speaking the Congress is not having any paper. But there are other parties also. Even the PSP is not having any paper whose circulation is countrywide. The Communist Party is having a paper, or a chain of papers I should say, and those papers are having countrywide circulation.

Shri Narasimhan: Probably theirs is the biggest chain.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: That is what I am trying to head to. If they publish something in *New Age*, the same thing might be published in *Navyug* also or in Bengali or in any other press. In that way, they can succeed in desseminating the news and views they like. Therefore, I want that we should not introduce regimentalisation in our country, because we are a free country, a democratic country. With a view to create democratic traditions, it is necessary that we should give full scope to our correspondents, editors, sub-editors and the whole gamut of people who are running the press. No corporation, no Minister, no Government or political party can possess the sense for news. It is a very gifted person who has that. He may be a poor small man; he may be employed by any employer. But, that kind of a person possesses the nose for news. It is he who can go into the Assam riots or the strike riots and get news. Two or three parties were interested in creating a strike in the country.

Shri Rajendra Singh: Everything was truthfully reported?

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: Yes; that is what I say. The papers of India stood by the nation, not by the Government. They realised the truth. They

[Dr. Ram Subhag Singh]

were not misguided by Shri Rajendra Singh. I want that Shri Rajendra Singh should himself have gone to the jail rather than sit in the South Avenue flat. He should have taken courage and gone to jail. The papers favoured him by publishing his statements.

Shri Rajendra Singh: I was sitting in the North Avenue flat. Nobody came to arrest me. I was not in hiding.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: My hon. friend Shri Rajendra Singh ought to be grateful to the press of India who got all his statements published without verifying whether he is really interested in the strike or not. So, I think, our newspapers did well during the strike time. They defended our democractic traditions. They defended the interests of the nation and they knew how the news and views on the strike should be given and what the people of India are in need of. The best news is that which an account of any readable material and is of a truthful nature. This should be given in the press. Those correspondents who stand by this theory are the best correspondents.

My hon. friend Shri Joachim Alva gave the example of Ceylon. Other friends may give the example of Russia or China, etc. Today, we get news from China. There is a very powerful news agency there. There is no other source to check up the authenticity of the reports that that news agency gives. Therefore, it is essential that 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 news agencies should function in the country. More so in the languages for catering to the requirements of the language newspapers. So, I think our press had stood by the country during the pre-Independence period. They stood by the country during the strike period and also during the Assam riot situation. Three or four papers might have gone wrong. But, the majority of the press criticised the action even by implication of those papers.

I quite agree with what the Prime Minister said that there are sometimes tyrants who prevent expression of thought. Our structure is based on freedom of expression and freedom of opinion. Unless we have a free and democratic press, we won't be able to give free news to our people and views also. Therefore, it is essential that regimentalisation of the type of Russia or China or the chain system of newspapers should not be allowed to be imposed on our country.

Shri A. C. Guha (Barasat): Mr. Chairman, it is good that Shri Indrajit Gupta has brought this subject before the House though there may be difference of opinion about the wisdom or usefulness of having a committee of 45 Members of the Houses to go into the question.

I think the press in India is fully free and it has been discharging its work in a fairly good manner. But, one tendency is developing, that is, chain of newspapers under the control of one group of persons or one person. I think Government may take certain steps to stop or as far as possible to curb that tendency. In Bengal, newspapers are not under any capitalists as such. It is under men who are primarily journalists. When *Ananda Bazar Patrika* was started. I was living in the first floor of the same house and *Ananda Bazar Patrika* was being published from the ground floor of the same house. I think Shri Makan Lal Sen and Shri Suresh Chandra Mazumdar had not got more than Rs. 200 or 300 in their pockets when they started the paper. Now, the newspaper has become an industry and a very costly one too. I do not know whether it would be possible for the Government to reverse this tendency. I do not think that now-a-days it will be possible to start a newspaper with even Rs. 20,000 or Rs. 50,000 or 100,000. I do not know whether it could be made possible for a common man to start a newspaper. That has held the development of this chain system of newspapers which should, as far as possible, be discouraged.

About the news services, I think every Member of this House will regret the death of the United Press of India. I should say the Government strangled that news service. The United Press of India has done a tremendous service to this nation during the struggle for Independence of the country. The nation owes some debt of gratitude to that news agency. Even now, if it is possible for the Government to revive that name, I think it should be done. That name has some charm with us. Apart from that, it is bad to have only one news service. No country can have a proper supply of news from one news service. We have been hearing for some years that the Government are contemplating to encourage another news service. I wish the Minister discloses today how far that has progressed. I think the Chief Minister of West Bengal Dr. Bidan Chandra Roy was also taking some initiative. I am not sure whether the Central Government or the Ministry in the Central Government here has shown any responsiveness to the initiative of Dr. Roy. Something should be done to have another news service in addition to the P.T.I. Monopolist organisations are always bad. The P.T.I. also must have fallen into some wrong methods for which it is now being criticised in this House.

My hon. friend Dr. Ram Subhag Singh has referred to the Calcutta press. I know the Calcutta press for the last 50 years starting from the days of the "Sandhya". It is a very powerful press. I am proud the Bengal press is so powerful and it can really form and sway the ideas and sentiments of the people of Bengal. It has rendered good service even from 1905, 1906 up till today.

About the Assam episode, the Calcutta press has come in for criticism in the last few days. Also my hon. friend Dr. Ram Subhag Singh has referred to it. I should explain to this House that there was almost a complete black out of the horrors that were being perpetrated in Assam. The Assam Government or the news services there or even the Press Information Bureau of my hon. friend Dr. Keskar were not supplying adequate news about the happenings in Assam. Some energetic adventurous journalists took the risk of their life and supplied news. At such a time, there is bound to be some exaggeration. I admit in some cases, there was exaggeration. But one case of exaggeration or false news should not justify whole-sale condemnation. Two journalists of the Calcutta press were killed for supplying news to the people of the country. It should be recognised that they did a real service to the nation in exposing the whole thing to the country.

I quite agree that sometimes the tone of the editorials or some shift in putting forward the news or some adjectives in the headlines might have been or should have been avoided, but it was a time of excitement and horrible stories were coming. Yet, I expect the Calcutta press will better exercise control over itself.

I would like the hon. Minister to see if he can try to develop some code of conduct for the newspapers. There is a press advisory council or something like that in some of the States, and as far as I know these are mostly ineffective bodies. Why not make them effective? If the Prime Minister takes the initiative and invites the editors and other people interested in journalism in India and asks them to set up a code of conduct for themselves, I think it will not be difficult to develop such a code. We cannot do anything to fetter the Press. The press is becoming more and more powerful. So it is time that it is regulated in the service of the nation by developing a code of conduct.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh also referred to the Central Government servants strike. I was in Calcutta. I know to what tension the feelings of the people were roused by these two

[Shri A. C. Guha]

events, the Assam trouble and the Central Government servants strike. It was due to the tactful and firm handling of Dr. Roy that the situation could be controlled there. The Calcutta press also played its part, at least to the extent that no untoward event occurred in Calcutta as a repercussion to the Assam incidents. So, all these things should be recognised, and Government should see that the newspaper editors develop a code of conduct for themselves. They should not incite but should rather control the popular passions, they should see that news is disseminated in the proper way without appealing to passion.

I have nothing more to say, but I oppose this idea of having a committee of 45 members as such a committee cannot serve any purpose. Still, I congratulate Shri Gupta upon his having brought this matter before the House, because the matter requires some consideration from Government.

Shri Rajendra Singh: How do you reconcile the two?

Shri A. C. Guha: I would not like to learn from Shri Rajendra Singh about parliamentary technique. I have been here as a Member for three times the period he has been.

This requires some consideration from Government, and I have specifically suggested to the Minister two things. He should develop another news agency for the dissemination of news, and not depend only on PTI. He should also try to develop a code of conduct among the journalists of India.

Mr. Chairman: Shri Rajendra Singh. Ten minutes.

Shri Braj Raj Singht (Firozabad): We may have each five minutes.

Shri Inder J. Malhotra (Jammu and Kashmir): Let him take five minutes, and I will take five.

Shri Rajendra Singh: Two views have been put forward. There is an apprehension that if there is a curb on the press and dissemination of views and news, it may degenerate into something like the regimentation that we hear of in Communist countries. On the other hand, there is a feeling that if it is absolutely left in the hands of capitalists who have reasons to be partisan, our objective of socialism and democracy would suffer a lot. It cannot be denied that both have some substance. Since we are a unique country in the sense that we are trying to be, at least we have professed like that, a socialist and at the same time a democratic country, we have neither to copy anything from Russia nor from England or a country like that; we have to apply our own mind and through the force of our own genius bring about a balance, a synthesis and a sort of integration.

My hon. friend Shri Ram Subhag Singh has submitted....

Dr. Krishnaswami (Chingleput): Doctor Ram Subhag Singh, please.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: He is always known as "Dr."

Shri Rajendra Singh: You do not worry. I have much more respect for him than any one else.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh said that the press in India had behaved perfectly, and that the state of the press in India was something quite commendable. Maybe, I do not dispute it. But instead of discussing the ownership of the press and the news agencies, he said something which is of course true and tried to prove a point which was not there. So far as Indian correspondents and journalists are concerned, I dare say they are a fine lot, and very few in other countries can compare with them. But the question is not of our correspondents or journalists, the question is of the ownership of the news agency, of the press, where you would like to keep it. Some people have talked about freedom of the press. What is this freedom? If Shri Goenka, Shri Dalmia and Shri Birla are trusted to disseminate news and views, do you think it is freedom of the press? That means, you are giving licence to vested interests to do whatever they like and letting down the common man. The common man can never have the capacity to run a press. A few days before I was discussing with the Prime Minister, and he confessed to me that it is so difficult to have a press in India. It involves an expenditure of about a crore of rupees.

Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri (Nabadwip): In other countries it is much more.

Shri Rajendra Singh: I am giving a modest figure. For a common man to think of having a press is like letting his imagination run amuck. Therefore, the resolution brought forward by my hon. friend Shri Indrajit Gupta is not only necessary but exceedingly desirable, and there should not be any objection to its acceptance.

You have seen some Members accepting everything that Shri Gupta has said, but because of the fear of the party whip....

An Hon. Member: There is no whip.

Shri Rajendra Singh:......they add one sentence that they are not for the resolution. They are afraid of the control of the party. Even in this matter there is control of mind in the Congress Party. We criticise Russia for brain-washing, subjugation of the brain for State or party purposes, but what is happening here today? My hon. friend Shri Guha supported everything that was said by Shri Gupta and others, endorsed their feelings, but at the same time he was not for the acceptance of the resolution. Why this split personality? Why this lack of moral courage to stand by something which is truthful, to call a spade a spade. Democracy degenerates under this control of mind, and it is time we take care of it. Otherwise, as there was a Hitler or a Mussolini, there might be somebody coming on the scene in this country. And the whole thing would go to pieces. Man must remain truthful to himself and moral to himself.

The question of what has been done in Ceylon has been raised. I am most happy to acknowledge in this House that a Government run by a woman Prime Minister, a lady Prime Minister, has had the courage to bring about a curb on the press and at the same time initiate the people and the press in democracy.

Our Prime Minister is in the habit of telling so many things, but before the ink dries on the paper, he forgets about it. The Prime Minister has said that when a high-powered commission is appointed, its recommendations have a certain sanctity. He has scolded us, and branded us as something like intransigent and irresponsible when the strike situation was there. He said that the Pay Commission had made certain recommendations, and those recommendations had sanctity and certain sacredness about them, and, therefore, the working classes and their leaders should accept it.

In the Press Commission, we had men of integrity, high character and high position.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: Like Shri Jaipal Singh.

Shri Rajendra Singh: Yes, like Jaipal Singh. Let not my hon. friend worry about it. And they made some recommendations. May I know from this Government why all those recommendations which were made by a commission appointed by the Government themselves were put in cold storage for so long?

Shri Indrajit Gupta: They were unanimous recommendations.

Shri Rajendra Singh: Yes, they were unanimous recommendations. Does it not indicate that this Government is held in the bondage of the capitalists, whose interests they do not want to violate much less to injure? Therefore, it is a very serious situation. And I would submit that if the temporary gain of keeping the Congress in power demands that they must keep the situation as it is, then it will be an ill day for this country, an ill day for our times, and an ill day for our generation and for generations to follow.

Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi (Ludhiana): The intention of the resolution is to ensure truthfulness and good moral standards in the field of journalism. That may be good, but the method suggested, namely to have control is certainly very objectionable.

The hon. Mover of the resolution has mainly emphasised the tendency to have monopolies of a chain of presses in India. But I am afraid that free enterprise is a prerequisite of a free press. If we want to have a free press, naturally, we must have free enterprise. Also, we have got to see that the standards are kept. I concede that. But we have also to see the circumstances and the conditions, whether the evil has reached a stage which calls for a control. On that aspect, we had a commission some time back, and I believe my hon. friend the Mover knows it very well that the Press Commission held a sort of examination as to the manner in which news was given by the press, and also views, and the views were also commented upon. For that purpose, they selected a series of newspapers, made a list thereof, and had an examination. And they came to certain conclusions. I would only draw the attention of the House to those conclusions which relate to dissemination of news as well as the comments on the views. At page 341 of their report, the Press Commission say:

> "Instances are not many of the essential facts being deliberately omitted or suppressed to suit the editorial policy of the newspaper. In most cases, the mistakes are unintentional and can be attributed to many causes; the newsprint situation, inadequate and not highly skilled staff, hurried handling and translation of news reports, and economic and general conditions of working journalists obtaining in different language sectors of the newspaper industry.".

Again, while discussing the presentation of news, they say:

> "In the very large number of newspapers studied and the variety of topics in respect of which the study was carried out, there have been very few instances where a report has been twisted and only some cases where the comment has been, to some extent, unfair in the light of our definition above.".

Further, while dealing with the views, they have come to the conclusion:

> "In their comments also on the particular items selected, the newspapers have been quite fair.".

So, when we have had an examination only five or six years ago, and a Commission has come to the finding that there has not been distortion of news or of comments by and large, I do not think any necessity arises for a control on the newspapers in the way in which this resolution envisages.

As I have already said, free enterprise is necessary for a free press. In this connection, I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to certain recommendations of the Press Commission to which attention has not been paid so far, namely the recommendations pertaining to section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, and sections 124A, 153A and 295A of the Indian Penal Code. My hon. friend knows it very well. But I am sorry to have to bring to his notice how grossly section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code has been abused in the Punjab. Pressmen have been arrested under section 144 and put in jail, and there was opposition from the newspapermen, and it was on the decision of the advisory committee only that they were released. If these recommendations had been implemented, and section 144 had been amended, and it had been specifically laid down that this would not be used in the matter of the Press, then I submit that such abuse would not have taken place. It is profoundly bad that section 144 should be used in their case. Similarly, my comments also apply to sections 124A, 153A and 295A of the Indian Penal Code.

While I oppose the resolution on the ground that it is not necessary, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to these recommendations, and request that it would be well if he has these recommendations implemented, or has some other commission about these things.

Shri Inder J. Malhotra: At the very outset, I must say that my hon. friend Shri Indrajit Gupta has certainly focussed the attention of this House on a very basic and important question. Certainly, I do agree with my other hon. friends also who have said that we should not put any curb on the freedom of the press. I am one of those persons who would like to see that no curb is put on the freedom of the press.

But in the resolution, the main point is the "dissemination of news and views by newspapers". In a democratic country, the press and especially newspapers, play an important role. It is of importance how the news is reported in the newspapers, how distinction is made between objective reporting and bad reporfing. So are these are certainly very important questions.

My hon. friend Dr. Ram Subhag Singh has given certain examples that at the time of the recent Central Government Employees strike and other occasions also he said that the Indian press had done a wonderful job. I agree with him. But there are other instances also. I would like to cite just one instance. When Premier Chou En-lai was in India during his last visit, our Defence Minister Shri Krishna Menon met him. I read that news story covering this meeting reported on the second page of *The Indian Express*. On reading this news story, I was given a sort of impression, and it conveyed the idea to me through this news story that as if Shri Krishna Menon had done some kind of conspiracy against India. Do we call this objective reporting? When it is a news story, it must be an objective news story reported objectively, and no views of any newspaper or news agency or any person who controls the news agency or the newspaper should come in.

I have no time at my disposal to speak further. I am grateful to you for giving me a chance to participate in the debate. I must congratulate my hon. friend on bringing forward this Resolution. Certainly, I agree with Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi also that there may not be an immediate need for any Committee of Parliament Members to go into this question. At the same time, I would request the hon. Minister, as some other hon. friends have also pointed out, that it is high time we should started doing something to put an end to the growing monopolistic tendencies in the Indian Press

Shri Braj Raj Singh: Will Government advise the PTI to have a representative of the employees on the board of directors of the PTI as recommended by the Press Commission? If the PTI does not agree to this, will Government consider the possibility of not subscribing to the PTI in the manner in which they have been doing? Secondly, will Government take any steps to break the chain of newspapers as disclosed in the latest Report of the Registrar of Newspapers?

Shri Joachim Alva: I support the demand my hon friend has made that there should be a director on behalf of the employees on the board of directors of the PTI.

The Minister of Information and Broadcasting (Dr. Keskar): I have carefully listened to the speech of the Mover and also the speeches, some of them very eloquent, made by hon. Members here. In the short time at their disposal, they have tried to dispose of many points and many important questions.

Now, there are two ways in which I can deal with this Resolution. The hon. Mover has put forward a particular objective in his Resolution. At the same time, in speaking on the Resolution he has mainly spoken on the Press Commission's Report. So I am put in a difficult position of having to deal either with the objective that he has placed or with the Press Commission's recommendations in regard to which he has charged Government that they had, by and large, failed to carry out their recommendations.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: May I make it easier for the hon. Minister? Shri Warior moved an amendment.

Dr. Keskar: I have seen it.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: I accept that amendment. That makes it easier. It just adds to the end of my Resolution, 'as recommended by the Press Commission, 1954'. It deals with the whole thing.

Dr. Keskar: No doubt, in that part of the Resolution, he says 'as recommended by the Press Commission'. But in his speech, he has, first of all, made an accusation that the Government have, by and large, failed in implementing the Press Commission's recommendations.

The Press Commission's Report is a very big document running into hundreds of pages. It was debated in this House twice and at very great length, for the whole day. It will be beyond my power to deal all those points in the short time at my disposal. At the same time, it would not be possifor me to ignore what the hon. Member has said. So with your permission, I will, first of all, very briefly deal with the points that he nas raised which are, of coures, linked with the other question that he has mentioned but which is more general.

I would like to mention briefly the important recommendations of the Commission. If we take all, there are hundreds of recommendations of all types that the Commission has made, and many of them are minor, some are procedural and some are quite important. Now I will take up the important recommendations. In taking them up, I would like to state here very frankly that hon. Members when they discussed this question here gave the greatest importance to probably what, in my opinion, was the most important recommendation of the Commission, that is, in regard to the service conditiions of working Journalists. When the debate took place here on that question, all the hon. Members insisted that it was a most important and revolutionary recommendation and Government should try to implement it as quickly as possible. The Working Journalists (Wages and Conditions of Service) Act was passed and it is functioning at present.

I shall briefly mention all the main recommendations, one by one. But I may remind the hon. Members that the Commission expressly asked the Government to take up certain recommendations while the others were addressed generally to the Press. The Commission was extremely cautious and careful and they did not ask the Government to take up anything which would infringe the freedom of the Press completely or curb the freedom of expression of opinion by the Press.

Then there was the price-page schedule. This is an important question and hon. Members know that when we deal with this question we should do it in such a way that we are not accused of trying to curb the freedom of the Press. At present the draft price page schedule has been published for the information of the newspapers and by the middle of this month their comments would be available and the Government will pass final orders and promulgate the schedule very soon after that.

Two important questions were mentioned by Shri Gupta and I shall take them up later. Now, they had asked about the question about the Press Registrar. The Commission had given very great importance to have a central agency which would register the facts and statistics relating to newspapers in a fair and truthful manner so that we can judge the trends in the Press and have authentic information about it. The Registrar has been appointed. The Press (Book and Registration) Act has been amended and recently there was another amendment and a full discussion then.

Two other questions have come up. One is about the news agencies. I would like the hon. Members to read carefully the Commission's recommendations. They say that the Press Trust of India, the most important news agency, should be transformed into a Trust and there should be other organisational modifications. But the hon. Members have forgotton to read the other part of it. The recommendation is addressed, not to the Government, but to the directors. The Commission have said: We trust and hope that the management of the PTI will bring about this transformation as soon as possible. I have had the benefit of a talk with the Chairman and Members of the Commission and I have always consistently expressed the reluctance for any Government intervention in the matter. My hon. friend Shri Alva very eloquently said that there was only one news agency and other hon. Members 'okayed' it. There should be more; at least two or three agencies should function in the country. But it is not proper to ask the Government to start them. First of all you say that Government should have nothing to do with the Press. At the same time you want the Government to start news agencies or to have them started. That is a contradictory position.

18 hrs.

Shri A. C. Guha: The Government has to give facilities.

Dr. Keskar: What facilities?

Shri A. C. Guha: I particularly mentioned the initiative taken by Dr. B. C. Roy, and I think nothing has come out.

Dr. Keskar: Do you think that is a facility?

Shri A. C. Guha: Yes.

Dr. Keskar: I do not call it a facility.

Shri Rajendra Singh: Sir, certain industries are reserved for the Government, for public sector enterprises and certain industries are reserved for the private sector where the Government is aiding, helping and assisting financially. Therefore, if such modifications and adjustments can be brought about in the field of industry, cannot something of that nature be done for bringing into being some other Press agencies?

Dr. Keskar: It is for the Government to support. If a good news agency starts on the lines that the hon. Member is mentioning, the Government certainly will subscribe to such a news agency, but I think it is wrong to ask the Government to start a news agency or have it started, because I am sure the hon. Members opposite will be the first persons to come and attack that news agency saying that it is a Government news agency.

Shri Narasimhan: That wil be putting the cart before the horse.

Dr. Keskar: So it is easy to critise both ways. The Government is careful to see that we do not take any such steps. Shri Guha referred to the efforts made by Dr. Roy. Dr. Roy felt very much about the passing away of the U.P.I., and he tried to see that agency started again. We said and even now we repeat it here that if any news agency of that type is started and it works on principles recognised by us as necessary and fair for a news agency, certainly we will look to such a venture sympathetically.

There was the question of facility to be given. All the necessary facilities are available for any *bona fide* news agency, as mentioned in the statement that I had occasion to place on the Table of this House. The point is—I insist that this is a very important and fundamental point—saying that the PTI is doing this or doing that is not enough. I do not want to go into the details, but a number of things have been quoted. I must have the explanation of the PTI before I can say whether they are correct or not. It is very difficult for a news agency, for example, which has to select from hundreds of items a particular number of items which it has to send. They may have their own explanations, and I must have them before I can pass any opinion on what the hon. Members have said.

But, Sir, I say this, that we would welcome the formation of other news agencies, and we have laid down the criteria for formation of *bona fide* news agencies in the statement that has been placed on the Table of the House. If other agencies come up certainly Government will look with sympathy on the coming up of such agencies. That does not mean, of course, that Government helps every agency; Government does not help, Government might subscribe to agencies which it finds useful. But agencies are free to come up and if they fulfil the minimum criterion those agencies will certainly be given, what can be called, the necessary, communication facility that might have to be given. Therefore, I would beg the House not to take a wrong perspective.

Shri Feroze Gandhi (Rae Bareli): Why not ask for the advice of the Prime Minister of Ceylon?

Shri Rajendra Singh: The Prime Minister of Ceylon has got more courage than the Prime Minister of India.

Dr. Keskar: As long as the present democratic structure exists here and the definition of freedom of speech that we have in our country continues, I am afraid, I will not be able to call for that advice.

Another important point Mr. Gupta has tried to make is about the Press Council. In fact, after listening to his speech I was under the impression that it was probably the most important recommendation of the Commission. Probably, because the Press Council has not been set up the hon. Member has tried to emphasise as if this is the most important recommendation. I know it is one of the important recommendations, not necessarily the most important. At the same time, I would like hon. Members to remember one or two things regarding the Press Council. We should not run away with the idea that the Press Council, though it will be a statutory body—will have any punitive or other powers. The Press Council will be a body with moral power only, just as the Press Council in England. Only, that is a voluntary establishment, and this will be a statutory establishment. Therefore, some of the things that some hon. Members expected from the Press Council are not possible of realisation, excepting that the public will know about certain papers or the trends of ownership; but that will not bring about a change in the trend excepting to the extent that is possible by pressure of public opinion and no further. Therefore, in the matter of a Press Council that is contemplated, we should also remember that the Council's powers and functions are limited and, even though it is statutory, it is meant to be a kind of self-regulating Board in the industry.

Here, I would just refer, in a sentence, to the experience of the Press Council in England on which model, to some extent, the Press Commission based its recommendations. The working of the Press Council has revealed broadly that though it is useful, it had not proved to be as useful as it was expected to be, because, in many cases, where the papers were censured by the Press Council, the papers had just ignored the censure and continued to do what they wanted to do. One of the papers has defied the Press Council also. I do not say that for that reason, a Council is not necessary. It is necessary in the sense that there will be at least one body which can express an authoritative opinion about a particular paper. That is a very desirable thing. But here, we come up against the difficulty: as you know, the Government tried to implement that particular recommendation, but when we brought a Bill before the Rajya Sabha, in the course of the discussion, it was revealed that there had developed a fundamental difference of opinion between the two sections of the press about the directors of the Council. The working journalists felt that the composition of the Council should be changed and the proprietorial section said that they did not need any statutory Press Council and that if at all anything was needed, there can be a voluntary Press Council. In spite of the proprietorial section's rejection of the proposal, we would even now like to pursue it provided we feel that the general basic composition, as recommended by the Press Commission, is not changed. When I mean composition, I mean the composition of the Council. There are other matters also on which difference of opinion was expressed. I personally feel that we can come to an understanding about these differences, but I feel that if the views that were expressed then, regarding the composition of the Council, still persist, it would be difficult for us to proceed further in this matter, because,—unless it is going to be a moral body—if both the wings of the press, for different reasons, reject the Press Council, what is the use of having such a moral censuring body or a body which will try to exert moral pressure?

The main point is that the Council will have to be composed of certain members, a certain number of them being working journalists and others representing the proprietors or some other persons as recommended by the Press Commission. The definition of working journalists led to some difference of opinion, and it was said that editors should not be included in the term "working journalists", because they are or they might be on the proprietorial side. This led to a difference of opinion and we felt that until we have had further talks with both the sections and come to a clear understanding of the question, it would not be desirable to consider this question, because, we do not want to have this Act, creating a Council, in which both the sides disagree with us, and the Council thus starting under very unfavourable auspices. At least we should have a large section of the Press with us in this matter before we proceed further. Otherwise, I can assure the hon. Members that I certainly like the Council to come up and to function, so that it might at least serve the purpose of bringing before the bar of public opinion those opinions which do not observe journalistic standards and also other things which have been recommended by the Press Commission.

In this connection, a question was raised about the Press Commission's recommendation on concentration of ownership, monopoly, etc. I would like to remind hon. Members that the recommendation if they read it carefully—is not for having any legislation by Government. First of all, they have asked that we should watch

[Dr. Keskar]

carefully for trends which will increase the concentration of ownership or increase monopolistic trends and later to think to what we can do about it, because the Commission has repeated in other parts of the report that whatever we do must be done in such a way that the freedom of the Press is not infringed. So, it is not an easy proposition. So, the Commission had recommended that once this has been carefully considered and it is felt that there is a monopolistic trend to a very considerable extent, then we should think carefully as to what can be done about it or whether anything can be done about it. This is not an easy question.

Of course, the Press Registrar's reports were quoted. I myself was going into this question of chains and groups which are on the increase. As the hon. Member had once said, it takes a lot of money to start newspapers now. The chains are growing because those who have money can start a new paper easily and those who have not are not able to do it. But we should not rush into saying that monopolies or chains can be curbed or we will be able to curb them in a particular way, because when I looked at the chains, I was surprised to find that apart from some chains like the Birla chain or the Dalmia chain, the chain of papers of the Communist party of India is as large—there are 7 dailies, more than 8 or 9 weeklies and a number of monthlies.

Shri Rajendra Singh: When I said it, it applied to everybody. It is not about communist or capitalist papers.

Dr. Keskar: I am not here to quote Shri Rajendra Singh. I have got my own figures. They have got every liberty to start any number of papers they like. But this fact first came to my notice when I began to look at the various chains existing in the country.

Supposing we take up the question of control of monopolies. Will it be proper for me to think of controlling the chains of papers of political parties as important as the communist party of India? I will have to think very carefully about it. These questions are there. I am not saying that we should not curb monopolies.

Shri Warior: You are comparing Dalmia with the Communist Party and the Congress Party. Dalmia is not in the Congress Party.

Dr. Keskar: Is is not for me to say whose chain it is. The question is, the hon. Member is so subjective that he only thinks of the person. I am here to consider the fact. Does it mean that we should allow chains of political parties only and nobody else? So, all sorts of questions will come up. My point is, we have to consider this question very carefully. In fact, the Commission's recommendation was that the Council, when it is formed, should consider these matters very carefully and if they feel that the tendency is increasing, in that case, they should suggest as to what can be done about it. Even there they were not very sure as to what we can get, and they have suggested one thing *e.g.* the diffusion of ownership. There also they have been very careful in suggesting not to the Government but to proprietors that we should try to create a greater diffusion of ownership than is existing today.

Now I come to the Resolution of my hon. friend, where he says:

> "to go into the question of dissemination of news and views by newspapers in the country with a view to making proposals for ensuring truthfulness, objectivity and good moral standards in the field of journalism."

Now, the object of ensuring truthfulness, objectivity and good moral standards is very good. The only thing is how are we going to enforce it? How are you going to bring about an equation between the freedom of the press and some kind of control by which you can enforce it? Let us consider this very carefully. I personally feel that in such matters where the freedom of the press is involved, we must think ten times before we take a step which will infringe on the freedom, which has been gained after great labour and which I consider as a very precious thing for the foundation of democracy.

Hon. Members here have referred to various aspects. Some have referred to the question of agencies. I think Shri Indrajit Gupta and Shri Warior stated that certain new agencies or papers omitted or purposely left out something. If a paper leaves out something, does it mean that paper has or has not a right to leave it? I can quote also from other papers. For example, I was looking at the *New Age* where, while the Chinese expedition climbing Everest was given high priority, no mention at all was made of the Indian expedition team to Everst. I cannot blame them for that. They give importance to what they consider proper. It is not possible for me to blame them for doing this.

Shri Warior: There was no Everest expedition from our side at that time.

Shri Raghunath Singh: They did not publish anything about our shipping.

Dr. Keskar: So, there is no question of imposing any control for that. Every press has got a right to publish what it considers proper. I think one of the important functions of a newspaper is the selection of news, here as elsewhere, before publishing them, and on that the hon. Member opposite has the same right as some hon. Members here. I can take out any number of quotations from the papers of my friend's party where news has been left out, important news has been left out and some other things put instead. I consider it their right to do it. Why should we try to stop them? We will have to be careful before we do it.

If they so desire, let them come to me, let us talk it over and we can see whether any such action will not ultimately result in stopping the papers from publishing what they feel, what they consider to be the most important piece of news. The selection of news is an essential part of the freedom of the press. I personally do not like a number of important things to be left out or highlighting some things which need not be highlighted e.g. for the security of the country etc. But if I do that for a particular paper, I might have to take away the freedom of the other paper also.

Therefore, this question should be considered from a special point of view. I think any such thing is likely to lead to an undesirable control over the right of newspapers to select their news and views. 45 Members of Parliament are not going to suggest a wise method of selecting news and views. That, I am of the opinion, would be putting too much of a terrible burden on those 45 Members.

It will not be an easy thing for them. In fact, it is possible that they might try to be non-committal in the end. Though the object is desirable and I am one with Shri Gupta in wanting that there should be high standards of the press, in that matter the Press Commission was very careful in recommending that we should try to put moral pressure on papers, for example, condemning or expressing a kind of dis-approbation about papers, for example, the yellow journalism to which a reference was made, so that they felt that. Even in a matter where a paper tries purposely to suppress something if we try to stop that particular paper from doing that, we will have to stop the others also. Ultimately it will lead to a kind of control over newspapers by which free expression of opinion cannot take place.

[Dr. Keskar]

The matter is very important and requires to be discussed at great length. I have just mentioned a few of the very important points which cropped up. At some other time I shall be very happy to take it up again and discuss it at length. It is a very important question. If we want to see in this country that our press by and large functions in the best way and observes the best standards of journalism, we should see what can be done about it. I would not call it regimentation, but rather any strong pressure to do this or that or some kind of an enactment or a directive is not likely to achieve that object. In any case I would not like my hon. friend to put this burden on the 45 hon. Members of Parliament.

I feel that though the intention of the Resolution is good, it is misconceived. It is said here "as recommended by the Press Commission". The Press Commission's recommendation is that we should use our moral powers of persuasion—I am saying by and large. They have made certain recommendations. Slowly and gradually we can put the force of public opinion on the press to see that they conform or try to conform to it. We should not try to go beyond that. In my opinion such a committee is not likely to improve upon the recommendations of the Commission.

Shri Indrajit Gupta (Calcutta—South West): Mr. Chairman, Sir, my worst fears and apprehensions have been confirmed by the hon. Minister's speech because this proves that the Government has no intention whatsoever—at least at the moment—of progressing in the direction of attempting, whether by persuasion or by discussion or by any other method, the implementation of these two or three vital recommendations which I had mentioned earlier. I do not say that they were the only recommendations or that they were the most important recommendations, but they were certainly among the very important recommendations of the Commission regarding the PTI and the Press Council.

Lots of bogeys have been raised here about regimentation, pressure, control, thought control, freedom being violated and all sorts of things. As far as I understand it, my Resolution and the way I moved it that day —and now as I accept this amendment which Shri Warior has moved—makes it quite clear that there is no burden, which Dr. Keskar is so afraid of and does not want the 45 hon. Members of Parliament to be saddled with. The burden has already been dealt with in the pages of this Report. We do not want to go over the whole ground again. It is not necessary. What I am asking the 45 hon. Members to do is to go into the question, to assist the hon. Minister in finding out as to what are the difficulties and problems that the Government is facing in implementing these recommendations which have already been made by the Press Commission as a result of a very exhaustive enquiry. There is no question of duplicating the enquiry all over again. So what is the objection? I do not understand it.

There is no question here of regimentation. What I have suggested applies equally to all papers or to all chains or monopoly groups, whether they include the Communist Party or not. I do not want to make an exemption for the Communist Party. If the impact of such chains on the dissemination of news and views is harmful to objectivity and good standards of journalistic reporting, let them be gone into.

Somebody suggested a code of conduct. Very good. I support that. A code of conduct has actually been suggested by the Press Commission itself. But was it to have a statutory force? No. All codes of conduct are voluntary things.

I may point out that much has been said here about the freedom of the press. My whole contention is that an impression is being created that a certain freedom exists which is being sought to be curbed or controlled or regimented in some way, whereas "the whole object of my Resolution is to show that, in fact, freedom of journalism is today subjected to certain control and undesirable regimentation by virtue of the way that the proprietors in this newspaper industry are exerting their financial and economic power to distort the freedom of the press. Actually, there is regimentation, and control being exercised by these powerful groups which control these papers".

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh waxed eloquent about the way news was disseminated about the strike to serve the interests of the nation. I would like to ask him also, when the Government of India decides that in the interests of the defence of the country, they should build their military trucks for the Army, and the *Hindustan Times* runs a campaign against it and runs it down in every possible way because it conflicts with the interests of Mr. Birla. . . .

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: Your papers are advocating the giving of 15,000 square miles to China. That is what you want. Should that be the standard in this country?

Shri Indrajit Gupta: Let my paper's standards be gone into. All right.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: Your party and papers also?

Shri Indrajit Gupta: Let them be gone into. I have nothing to hide. This is the first time, incidentally, that I have heard that the Indian Expedition to Everest which did not reach the top of Everest, should be given the same prominence as any other Chinese or other expedition which actually reached the same.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: You ran down the Indian expedition.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: Mr. Birla's interests as a motor manufacturer are at stake and he has to run a campaign. Is it standing by the nation?

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: Nobody wants it. It is your party. . .

Shri Indrajit Gupta: Wait a minute. When the newspapers run a systematic campaign against the public sector which the Government has started, which the nation has started, which is the core of the Third Five Year Plan and of any Five Year Plan, is that standing by the nation?

When I was moving the Resolution, I referred to the hon. Prime Minister's speech on foreign affairs in the other House. I think it is a matter of shame that our Prime Minister had to admit that. It is not his fault. But, look at the condition the country has come to. Discussing the question of the Congo and the reports that have come in the press and that are reaching the country regarding the events in the Congo, the Prime Minister of our country had to stand there and say that the reports that we have been receiving so long have turned out to be mostly exaggerated. I have no time go into all that.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: The Prime Minister also said here yesterday something about your party and papers.

Mr. Chairman: Order, order. Let him proceed.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: I do not know why the hon. Member gets worried. I never interrupted him.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: You are misquoting therefore. I am interrupting. Please remember that the Press Council was suggested to be set up in the report of the Press Commission. May I read one para from the Press Commission's report? The whole object was to safeguard the independence of the press. It says here:

> "We have discussed earlier, the need for maintaining editorial independence, objectivity of news

[Dr. Ram Subhag Singh]

> presentation and fairness of comment. These aspects should be looked after by a Press Council which will also have the responsibility of fostering the development of the Press and protecting it from external pressure."

So, the Press Council should not be held up as a bogey, something which will be a sort of pressure or regimentation on the press.

The hon. Minister quite correctly said that though it is suggested to be set up by statute, it will function purely by moral sanction and moral persuasion. Why is it not being set up? Because certain people objected. Why did they object? What are the difficulties they are facing? What are the problems that they are having? Who is going to go into that? Is it such a burden that 45 Members cannot cope with and find out what is the difficulty in the way of setting up this Press Council?

Since Shri Joachim Alva made a reference to the Press Commission and the Commission in England, may I just for the information of the House read a small quotation from this Book? Perhaps the hon. Minister has seen it. It is a very recent book called *Dangerous Estate*, dealing with the function of the press and newspapers in Britain, written by a very eminent gentleman Mr. Francis Williams, who is quite a leading figure in the newspaper world in Britain. This is what he says:

> "The journalist ought to accept and ought to be required to accept standards of professional integrity morally not less mandatory than those of the barrister, the solicitor or the doctor. But, what is required in their case to safeguard the public against professional malpractice is required in his case not only for this reason, important though it is, but also to provide the journalist himself with a safeguard against those pressures to which one who is dependent upon a single master may find himself vulnerable: a professional power to set against, and if necessary act as a counterbalance to, the immense and growing power of financial control in the newspaper industry."

> "It is possible that the Press Council will provide such a counter-power."

He is talking about Britain. Then he says:

> "...there would have been great advantage in establishing the Council as a statutory body with powers analogous to, although not identical with, those of the General Medical Council. Such a statutory body would from the beginning have entered the field able to provide a valuable counter-balance to the massive power of commercial interest, which ought not to be left to decide alone the standards by which popular journalism is to live. Yet it is possible that a voluntary Press Council may in the end succeed in doing this no less effectively."

So, these things should be put in their proper context and perspective, and not distorted to create bogeys. Government should at least tell us what they have done to try to encourage the PTI to convert itself into a public corporation. Nothing has been said about that. They may not use pressure or compulsion, but certainly there is a moral responsibility on the Government to encourage the PTI, to help it, to advise it as to how to make this change. Nothing has been said.

Therefore, it is my suggestion that the committee envisaged in my resolution should be set up for this specific purpose. It is not going to make a new investigation, but we should know what things are blocking the way, what is preventing the implementation of this very vital recommendation, about which, I submit, no satisfactory answer has been given on behalf of Government. Many Members have agreed with the disease, it is only when the remedy is suggested that they throw up their hands in horror and say they oppose the resolution. I cannot understand this. Therefore, I commend my resolution.

Mr. Chairman: I shall first put the amendment to vote.

In the Resolution,—

add at the end—

"as recommended by the Press Commission, 1954."

The motion was negatived.

Mr. Chairman: The question is:

"This House calls upon the Government to appoint a Committee consisting of 45 Members of Parliament, 30 from Lok Sabha and 15 from Rajya Sabha, to go into the question of dissemination of news and views by newspapers in the country with a view to making proposals for ensuring truthfulness, objectivity and good moral standards in the field of journalism."

The motion was negatived.

18.32 hrs.

RESOLUTION *RE*. TARGET OF SHIPPING

Shri Raghunath Singh (Varanasi): Sir, I beg to move:

"This House is of opinion that the target of shipping be fixed at least at 5 lakh G.R.T. and Rs. 100 crores be forthwith sanctioned for this purpose."

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member may continue on the next Private Members' day.

18.33 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till eleven of the clock on **Monday, 5** September, 1960/**Bhadra 14, 1882** (Saka).*